EMMA;

OR,

The CHILD of SORROW.

A

NOVEL.

In TWO VOLUMES.

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LETTER XLV.

To Lady LOUISA STRETTON.

THE Interrogatories of my deareſt *Louiſa* ſhould have been anſwered ſooner, but I had an infinitely harder taſk to purſue—Perhaps you will gueſs, I mean writing to an exiled Friend. Oh! *Louiſa*, the Letter which accompanied yours almoſt broke my heart. I think he was a little unjuſt—And yet how can I blame him?—His love and his diſtreſs ſo violent! I hope, ſincerely hope, I have given peace to his boſom—Yet what has it not coſt me? I have owned more than I

ought even to him — I ſhall encloſe my anſwer to him, for your peruſal. Tell me if I am not too tender. Alas! I know I am. But I muſt tear myſelf from this too prevailing ſubject; I dare not longer indulge myſelf on the tender theme.

How amazingly have the manners of our Neighbours, the *French*, improved; or rather, as I am more inclined to ſay, corrupted the morals and conduct of our preſent Nobility. With what infinite eaſe and facility they introduce themſelves into our Dreſſing-rooms; one's Bed-chamber is ſcarcely held ſacred from the attacks of theſe Men of true Breeding. I really wonder how other Women find it; but, with the utmoſt ſerioufneſs that I can aſſume, I cannot keep ſome of them from treating me with a familiarity, that abſolutely almoſt becomes rude. If this is the *Beau Monde*, oh! ſend me back to the peaceful retreat of *Cleveland-place*. Did you think, my *Louiſa*, I ſhould ever wiſh to be ſettled there? Yet I certainly do. I hate *London* and all its ways.

Upon the ſtrength of meeting me two or three times at public places, one Lord *Belford* has taken on himſelf the office of my *Ciciſbeo*. He has called here once or twice. This morning, as I was at work in my Dreſſing-room alone, [my Siſter and Mrs. *Hotham*

Hotham were gone to ſee the *Tower*, I having a cold could not be of their party,] who ſhould be announced but his Lordſhip. I told him I was extremely ſorry Lord *Cleveland* was not at home to receive the honour of his Lordſhip's viſit. — But he aſſured me, in pretty plain terms, his *devoir* was meant to me; "that he had heard me ſpeak of the *Mourning Bride* as a favourite Play, and as it was to be performed the next evening, for the benefit of the *Lying-in Hoſpital*, he had taken the liberty of bringing me ſome tickets, which it would be conferring the higheſt honour on him to accept." He likewiſe added, "he was certain I could not refuſe, ſince ſo amiable a virtue as Charity was the motive. — I replied, "I was extremely willing to contribute any aſſiſtance to ſo laudable a ſcheme, and drawing out my purſe, took out five guineas, which I begged his Lordſhip would take the trouble of ſending to the Houſe; but that I could not think of accepting the tickets, as it was entirely out of my power to ſay whether I ſhould be able to uſe them, my Lord being from home." He paid me a profuſe number of compliments on my being ſo bountiful, and at the ſame time ſo duteous a Wife, to refuſe participating of the return which the Public made. — I anſwered to this, "That my Lord's generoſity put it in my power to gra-

tify my wiſh of ſuccouring the diſtreſſed; but that I by no means thought I was intitled to diſpoſe of my time without his knowledge or permiſſion; therefore muſt continue to wave his Lordſhip's polite offer." He ſwore by Heaven I was as much an Angel in mind as perſon. — "Oh! (continued he,) what an ineſtimable bleſſing does the happy *Cleveland* poſſeſs in ſuch a Wife! And yet *he* is blind to more than mortal perfection."

I thought it did not become me to liſten to ſuch encomiums from any Man, and likewiſe hear my Huſband condemned, therefore ſaid, "You do not do my Lord juſtice; whatever ſmall ſhare of merit I have, I am convinced is as conſpicuous in his eyes as it can be to any Man; as a proof, his diſtinguiſhing *me* from the reſt of my ſex, ſhewed he was not attached, as moſt Men are, to the glare of riches, or the dazzling charms of greatneſs. I am indebted ſolely to him for the rank I hold."

"Can any rank (ſaid he) be ſo elevated to which you would not do the higheſt honour? — Oh! Lady *Cleveland*, how happy would the Man before you be, were he an *Eaſtern* Emperor, might he have been permitted to have ſhared his Throne with you." I wiſhed to have reſented his impertinence, but knew not how. — "Upon my word, my Lord, (ſaid I, laughing,) I need not

wiſh

wiſh to go to a Tragedy; I think I have a capital Performer here, in the ranting hyperbolical ſtrain — But come, in return for the fine ſpeeches you have made, I will introduce one to you who is aiming at making ſpeeches likewiſe;"—ſaying which, I roſe and rang the bell, ordering the Nurſe and Lady *Harriet* to attend — I thought this would be the beſt method of turning a converſation I was heartily diſguſted with. He ſeemed vaſtly pleaſed with the Child, and I made ſome pretence for keeping the Nurſe in the room while he ſtayed. After ſome time, I told his Lordſhip, "I muſt take the liberty of informing him, that my hour for dreſſing was arrived, and that I dared to ſay my Lord *Cleveland* would be happy to ſee him another day." — I ſaw he was piqued at my ſending him away without his errand; however I did not mind that, as I rather wiſhed he ſhould ſee I was diſpleaſed with the impertinence of his behaviour. He had the aſſurance to ſay, "he would attend me to my toilet." — I replied, "That was a privilege to which my Huſband was yet a ſtranger." — "Oh! what *tramontane* notions! My charming Lady *Cleveland*, poſitively you muſt take a few leſſons on Propriety from ſome of our Circle." — "Excuſe me, my Lord, my leſſons of Propriety I take from the firſt ſource, my own

conſcience; that will always inſtruct me what to grant, what to deny; but you muſt now permit me to wiſh your Lordſhip a good morning."

Thus by main force almoſt I got rid of my troubleſome Gueſt; indeed, this is not the only time I have thought him ſo in a great degree. He was extremely importunate with me to dance the other night at *Soho*. Good God! *I* dance. I could have told him my heart has been too heavy ever ſince my marriage to join ſo joyous a groupe. Though my Lord married me for love, as ſome would ſay, I am certainly at preſent as much neglected by him as any Woman of Quality need be — My face is freſh in the *Monde*, and my figure not bad; ſo that I may look on myſelf juſt in a proper ſituation to be inſulted by every Fop and Rake about the Court. Every Man will dare to think himſelf juſtified in endeavouring to gain a heart which a Huſband rejects. How cautious, then, ſhould a Woman, ſo totally left to her own guidance, be of her conduct! I do not mean that I am in danger — My attachment ſecures my heart, and I hope my mind will remain untainted by the baſe ſophiſtry of theſe artful wretches. — But, my dear *Louiſa*, I am pained at the extreme indifference of my Lord, an indifference which has been gradually increaſing ſince Mrs.

Hotham

Hotham has been our Gueſt, but which makes infinitely larger ſtrides ſince our arrival in this nurſery of evil and intrigue.

At dinner I was ſpeaking of Lord *Belford*'s meſſage to my Lord. He aſked me, "What I had done with the tickets?"—I anſwered, "I had not taken them, as I did not know whether he (Lord *Cleveland*) would have approved of my accepting them; beſides, (added I,) I did not want to make a merit with Lord *Belford*; I think him a bold diſagreeable Man, who does not want the ſenſe of conferring favours to make him more aſſuming and impertinent." I own I ſaid thus much, to ſee whether my Lord would take notice, that I had ſome cauſe for being diſpleaſed with Lord *Belford*'s behaviour — But no, he remained playing with a deſert ſpoon, with the utmoſt compoſure.

Harriet was brought into the room. I found in her hand a very elegant tooth-pick caſe. "From whence came this?" I aſked of the Nurſe. She anſwered, "Lord *Belford* had given it to her Ladyſhip."—"Did Lord *Belford* play with Lady *Harriet?*" aſked Mrs. *Hotham*.—"I was obliged to ſend for her, (I anſwered, ſmiling,) to amuſe his Lordſhip; he would otherwiſe have attended me to my dreſſing-room, ſo I left *Harriet* to divert him. However, we

muſt take care of this, and return it to the right owner."

"Your Ladyſhip, I believe, is the right owner, ſaid the Nurſe; I heard my Lord ſay, that Lady *Harriet* muſt give it to you."

"This is a new way of preſenting a Lady with a tooth-pick caſe, certainly," ſaid Mrs. *Hotham*, laughing. "Here is ſome miſtake, (ſaid I,) but I ſhall certainly ſend it back. I do not think it ſo prudent to receive preſents from ſuch deſigning men. I am ſure there was not a word paſſed about tooth-picks. Will you be ſo good, my Lord, to ſend a meſſage about the Tickets; we may find ſome other time to go to the Play."—"It ſeems your concern, not mine," he anſwered. "Your concern and mine are pretty cloſely connected, (replied I, ſmiling,) but ſeriouſly, my Lord, you would not like I ſhould be obliged to this ſtrange man." "I don't like affectation," (anſwered he ſternly.) "I do not know what your Lordſhip means," ſaid I, with ſome ſurprize. "Then you may amuſe yourſelf with ſolving the riddle, Lady *Clevcland*, if you pleaſe." It was a pretty taſk to be ſure; but as his Lordſhip is incomprehenſible ſometimes, I ſuppoſe him to be ſo now, and will therefore lay his riddle aſide. He immediately challenged Mrs. *Hotham* to a party at Back-gammon.

But

But Lord *Belford* is not the only fluttering Fop whom I am to complain of; Lord *Oſwald* is another obſequious ſlave of the Fair. However, I think him, although not ſo troubleſome, a man of much deeper deſign than the firſt mentioned. He pays great attention to *Fanny*, outwardly, and takes great pains to convince me that he is fatally enſlaved by my charms. But, ſurely, I have ſaid enough to make you ſenſible how infinitely diſagreeable my ſituation is amongſt them all; I ſincerely wiſh myſelf back again. Yet here I muſt continue, till the pleaſure of thoſe who brought me hither is ſatisfied, and chuſe to carry me into the peaceful country again. I hate the hurry and confuſion in which I am perpetually involved. I have hardly a moment to myſelf. Both *Fanny* and I ſhould be happy to ſtay at home ſometimes, but we are not allowed to do ſo. At breakfaſt, every morning, ſome ſcheme is planned, and I am not permitted to put a negative.

You may have an idea of my loſing ſome part of my attachment, by leading a life devoid of thought; but you are miſtaken. The compariſons I am daily and hourly enabled to make between the outward and inward objects of reflection, muſt ever contribute to ſtrengthen rather than diminiſh the force of former habits. Ah! my *Louiſa!*

what a difference indeed! One would hardly think the ſame forming hand had created him and them. But he has improved Nature's work, they have debaſed her. I will not ſay a word more about them. Adieu! my dear Friend!

Yours,

EMMA CLEVELAND.

LETTER XLVI.

To Lady LOUISA STRETTON.

My deareſt LOUISA,

I Have received a Letter from my Mother, which has diſtreſſed me very much, as you will readily believe, when I acquaint you with the particulars of it. In my laſt I mentioned the name of Lord *Oſwald*, and that he paid great aſſiduity to *Fanny*. She has taken notice of this in her Letters to my Mother, and, I fancy, has mentioned him with ſome degree of partiality, which is hardly to be wondered at, as he has an inſinuating manner joined to a very good perſon. Theſe circumſtances I gather from my Mother's Letter to me, which I ſhall copy for your peruſal, that I may receive your opinion on it.

"*My*

"*My dearest* CHILD,

"I cannot help feeling the uneasiness incident to a tender Mother, when the apprehension of her Children being not happy seizes her. Some Letters which I have had from your Sister *Fanny* have given rise to the pain I am going to express. Though I was overjoyed, both for your sake and her's, that you were to be companions this winter, yet I sustained some allay, on finding your whole time was to be spent in Town. Every Post brings me an account of this or that place of public amusement. I am sorry to find so much time worse than thrown away; but that is not all; I am afraid the young and inexperienced heart of my dear *Fanny* will become the victim of some of the men whom novelty may make hover about her, and leave her hereafter a prey to a hopeless passion. I have some reason for my fears. I find both her and yourself left solely to your own guidance. I think I may depend on the prudence and virtue of my beloved *Emma*; but consider, my Love, how weak a barrier is the prudence of a Girl of sixteen, when opposed against the rhetoric of a pleasing Man, who is taking all opportunities of seducing her heart. Her virtue will be no security against the attacks of Love, because her virtue cannot be alarmed by the honour-

rable profeſſions of her Lover. She knows not deceit herſelf, nor can ſhe ever believe, till too late, that any man can be baſe enough to ſeek to gain her heart without any other motive than merely to encreaſe his conqueſts, and render an innocent young creature miſerable; yet this is done every day.

"In a Letter which lies before me, and over which I have been ſhedding the tender tear of apprehenſion, the dear *Fanny* informs me, ſhe has been three times to the *Pantheon*, and each night danced with Lord *Oſwald*. In ſhort, I find he is ever of your parties. She is eloquent in his praiſe, and merrily ſays, "You cannot think, Mama, how much *your tall Girl* is admired. I have a thouſand fine ſpeeches made me every day, by a thouſand fine men; but I laugh at them all, ſince I hear them ſay the ſame things to every woman they meet. I look on them as I do on my parrot, who has got ſome pretty ſentences by rote, but which make no impreſſion on the mind of the hearers. But I muſt not place my Beau, Lord *Oſwald*, in this unmeaning groupe; he is really as much their ſuperior as you can imagine. He is a man, whoſe behaviour I ſhould eſteem, let his perſon be as plain as every body muſt allow it to be agreeable; but what is his greateſt charm with me is the

the high opinion he has of my dear Siſter. He ſees, as indeed every one muſt ſee, that Lord *Cleveland* does not deſerve ſuch an angel as ſhe is. Oh! Mama, you know not half her excellence. But, as I ſaid, Lord *Oſwald*'s opinion of my *Emma* has heightened him in mine. He ſhews ſuch an exquiſite ſenſibility when he ſpeaks of her. He does not flatter my perſon as the reſt of the men do, which I think an argument of his good ſenſe, and of the ſincerity of the profeſſions he makes."—I need not, my Dear, tranſcribe any more from your Siſter's Letter, to prove that her heart is in danger; I am ſure you will be convinced it is. You know beſt whether ſhe may ſafely give herſelf up to the indulgence of her favourable opinion of this Lord *Oſwald*. Notwithſtanding the partiality of a Mother, I know her perſon muſt be pleaſing to every one, and then the artleſſneſs of her age, and the goodneſs of her mind, muſt make her appear amiable. Ah! Heaven avert that ſhe ſhould become the dupe of a pretended paſſion! Be you her Guardian, I am ſure ſhe will conceal nothing from you. Inſtruct her to ſecure her heart if poſſible, if not yet too late for the caution. Should he really be in earneſt in his profeſſions, inform yourſelf what are his morals. Prevent her being too much entangled,

before

before you know he is deſerving of her heart. His title and fortune will give him no value in my eyes; teach her not to be dazzled with them, or his exterior qualities, unleſs his real virtues ſtamp a merit on them. Think how unfortunate a Parent I ſhall be if not one of my Children are happy in their connections. Two are not ſo, from their own faults, in making an improper choice; the third dear Child—but I will not recall paſt ſcenes. Your good ſenſe and virtue will ſecure your laſting happineſs in that world where they neither marry, nor are given in marriage. Oh! my Love, protect this my laſt and darling Child from falling into miſery. If you ſucceed, I ſhall be bound to bleſs you with more than a Mother's bleſſing; if you fail, endleſs ſorrow will be the portion of her who ſubſcribes herſelf your ever tender and anxious Mother,

C. WOODVILLE."

Now, my dear *Louiſa*, how am I to act? You know I am not vain, therefore you will believe I am but too well convinced of what I am going to ſay. It is to me very evident, notwithſtanding the natural charms of *Fanny*, that the aſſiduity which this man ſhews her, is a ſcreen to his views on me. What ſuperior beauties can he diſcover

diſcover in me, which he does not find in her? What other motive can he have for giving me the preference, except that diabolical one of wiſhing to ſeduce the wife of another? I doubt *Fanny* has ſuffered her heart to be entangled. I have been uneaſy ſome time at his being of our party ſo much; but my voice goes for nothing. I mentioned to my Lord more than once, that I did not think it right for *Fanny* always to dance with Lord *Oſwald*; but he has ever treated my caution with the moſt apparent indifference. I told him once I thought he ought to provide her another Partner. His anſwer was, "He had had trouble enough with the family already, he ſhould give himſelf no further concern about them." Thus, you ſee, he throws the taſk ſolely upon me, and how I am to conduct myſelf in it I know not. I know *Fanny* to be of the moſt generous diſpoſition, yet can I be certain ſhe will receive, with a proper ſpirit, the account, that the man ſhe has reaſon to think her Lover, only makes her the dupe to his baſer purpoſes on her Siſter? How much like vanity will it appear in me to ſay, "My dear *Fanny*, Lord *Oſwald* is not an Admirer of you; his only motive for appearing ſuch, is to have the opportunity of ſtriving to gain my heart." I am more and more diſtreſſed

treſſed on the occaſion. I know not what courſe to take to preſerve her from falling a ſacrifice to a hopeleſs and unreturned paſſion, or to daſh all her blooming proſpects at once, by telling her what ſhe has to expect. You ſee how urgent my Mother is with me. Counſel me, my dear *Louiſa*, if you can. I will delay writing to my Mother till I have your anſwer; be punctual by the return of the Poſt.

With what art do theſe men proceed when they ſet about doing an ill action! He engages her eſteem and confidence by tenderly pitying my ſituation.

Fanny takes every opportunity of being by me at theſe odious public places, by which means Lord *Oſwald* is at my ſide continually; ſo fond is ſhe of her unhappy Siſter, that *Fanny* does not take notice, that when we three are together he hardly addreſſes himſelf to her; ſo true is the obſervation of the blindneſs of Love. If I ſhould take courage to inform him, I am uneaſy at the attention he ſhews my Siſter; I am but too apprehenſive he would draw very favourable concluſions from thence of my partiality for him, and think my ſolicitude for her welfare had its foundation in that ſource. At any rate, ſhe ſhall not be made the dupe of his artifice. My own conduct ſhall ſerve to undeceive him, ſhould

he

he be ſo arrogant as to form any preſumptuous hope on my bringing affairs to an *eclairciſſement*. I have hitherto prevented him from ever making downright love to me, and have pretty well kept up the appearance of not underſtanding him, therefore I ſhall have the better pretence for inſiſting to know what are his views with regard to *Fanny*. Should I be ſo happy (of which, however, there can be no doubt) to find I am miſtaken, and that he does not poſſeſs any undue warmth on my account, and that he really loves *Fanny*, even then I doubt he will not make her a good Huſband; his morals are too reprehenſible. Would to Heaven I had not brought her hither. I am diſappointed in all my views; but that is nothing new.

Adieu, my ever-dear *Louiſa!*

EMMA CLEVELAND.

LETTER XLVII.

To Lady LOUISA STRETTON.

I Can no longer pretend ignorance of Lord *Oſwald*'s deſign—The motive of his frequent viſits is now too obvious. But let me obſerve ſome degree of method in my diſagreeable relation.

Yeſterday

Yeſterday morning he waited on us to beg we would accompany him to the Maſquerade in the *Haymarket*, as to-morrow. Had I been Miſtreſs of my own inclinations it would certainly have been the laſt place I would have gone to, and he the laſt man I would have choſen for my *Chaperon*; but as it was, I had a very good plea to make, by ſaying a Maſquerade was not a favourite amuſement of my Lord's, and, as ſuch was the caſe, I was ſure he would not conſent to our going.—"It is not poſſible (ſaid he) that he could refuſe you any thing you would wiſh. Good God! could I refuſe ſuch an Angel! Condeſcend, then, my dear Lady *Cleveland*, to aſk where you might command."—"Indeed, (ſaid I, ſmiling,) I cannot run the hazard of a refuſal on any account in ſuch a matter as this; you know not how little power I have." He immediately took my hand, and gently preſſing it between his, with his eyes tenderly fixed on my face, he ſung, in a voice of the ſofteſt melody, this little Air of *Handell*'s,

"So much beauty ſweetly blooming
Shall thy Conſort's ſoul enſlave;
In thy lovely pow'r preſuming,
Aſk him all thy heart can crave."

I ſaw my poor *Fanny* change colour. Indeed, from his manner, it was impoſſible for

for her any longer to be deceived in him. I felt myſelf exceedingly perplexed by his behaviour, and the effect it had on my Siſter. I muſt own too, that his harmonious voice, ſo like my amiable baniſhed Friend, contributed much to the agitation with which I was ſeized. I very aukwardly complimented him on his vocal qualifications, a ſpecimen of which I had never before heard; he told me, in a whiſper, accompanied with a ſigh, "that my charms had inſpired him, and that if the effects of my Beauty could render him agreeable to me, he would aſk no other boon of Heaven." I had by this time recovered myſelf; and if the look I gave him had the leaſt correſpondence with my heart, it was full of the contempt and indignation I had conceived againſt him. The alteration of his features, however, leaves me not in doubt of his underſtanding the meaning of my eyes. He turned pale, and his lips quivered. I believe *Fanny*'s thoughts were too much taken up to know what had paſſed ſince the concluſion of the Song. I coldly ſaid to Lord *Oſwald*, that I would not have him loſe time in fixing his party, as it would not be our inclination, even had we the power to attend him to the Maſk; that, abſtracted from our diſlike to the diverſion we had ſeveral engagements on

cur-

our hands, which would deprive us of viſiting many public places during our ſhort ſtay in town. That we were engaged out to dinner, and were every moment in expectation of our Hair-dreſſers." His *chagrin* got the better of his *effronterie* on this occaſion, and only ſtammering out ſomething about his diſappointment, he in a very mortified manner took his leave.

Heartily glad was I, that, at any rate, we had got rid of him. I was at a loſs to know how to proceed with regard to *Fanny*. I had never ſeemed to obſerve the partiality, (alas! too viſible,) which ſhe had ſhewn him, therefore thought it ſtill better to appear ignorant of the true ſtate of her heart. I ſat myſelf down by her, and, taking her hand, "See, my Dear, (ſaid I,) to what impertinence, and, it may be danger, a woman is expoſed who is known not to be happy with her Huſband; had Lord *Cleveland* diſcovered for me the tenderneſs of Affection, or even given himſelf the trouble to wear the appearance of it, Lord *Oſwald* would not have preſumed to make the declaration he has done this morning. But if the conduct of my Lord thus leaves me defenceleſs, I muſt be more careful on my own account; my doors ſhall no more be open to that daring wretch. I own I have been deceived in him; I thought better

better of him than of Lord *Belford*; but they are all alike." During my ſpeech, *Fanny* ſat pale as aſhes; when I ended, ſhe turned her eyes on me; they were ſurcharged with tears; ſhe eſſayed to ſpeak, but her voice faltered. Overcome by her ſilent eloquence, I threw my arms round her; ſhe ſobbed on my boſom. We continued to mingle our tears for a conſiderable time. She was unable to ſpeak, and I thought it better to give her ſorrow this vent, before I urged her. After a conſiderable ſpace thus ſpent, ſhe lifted up her dear face. "What, (cried ſhe,) will my dear Siſter think of me? Though ſhe ſo well knows the exceſs of my love for her, will ſhe attribute all this concern to that alone?"—"Does my *Fanny* wiſh I ſhould? I will not ſuffer my thoughts to wander further than you would have them. I have received ſo many tender proofs of your affection, that even *this* may be placed to the account."—"No, no, my deareſt Siſter, you muſt no longer be deceived. Theſe tears, this agony has a leſs laudable ſource; but do not deſpiſe me; it requires an acquaintance with Diſſimulation to be out of the reach of Deceit; my own undeſigning heart has helped to deſtroy my peace of mind."

"It

"It wounds my ſoul, my deareſt *Fanny*, to ſee you thus diſtreſſed; but take courage, my Beloved, ſuffer not your peace of mind to be deſtroyed by a wretch unworthy your regard; you have a noble ſpirit, *Fanny*, exert it on this occaſion. My indignation riſes againſt him for being ſo baſe and mean, as to attempt to make you his dupe; but you are too clear-ſighted to be impoſed on by the low artifice. You and I, my Dear, are unfortunate in having been left at too early an age a prey to the tenderneſs of our own hearts; yet of the two you have had the hardeſt taſk aſſigned you, to be reduced to weep for the injuries you have received from the very hand you would have choſen to wipe away your tears had they flowed from any other ſource, is a ſpecies of miſery ſuperior to any I have felt."— "But, (cried the heroic Girl,) theſe tears are the laſt which ſhall ever flow on ſo worthleſs an occaſion. Yes, my Siſter, I will ſhew you I have the reſolution of at leaſt ſetting about the intire conqueſt of myſelf; and yet, added ſhe, in a ſofter tone, it was not ſo much his perſon or his manner that ſubdued me, as the tender ſolicitude he expreſſed for the beloved Siſter of my heart."—"But reflect, *Fanny*, on the motive of his ſolicitude."—"I do, my

my dear *Emma*, I do. I ſee him now in his own real character, and could almoſt deſpiſe myſelf for ever harbouring the ſmalleſt partiality for him. Indeed, I am more to blame than you think I am; I might have collected from his manner, had I not been blinded by ſelf-love, that his devotions were always yours. But I am ſufficiently puniſhed for my vanity; and I hope the experience, which has coſt me ſo much, will be guard ſtrong enough for the future, to preſerve me from the ſame deluſions." Are you not charmed and edified, my dear *Louiſa*, with this ſweet Girl? What reſolution at her tender age! I have juſt received your Letter; and am happy to find you coincide with my opinion; I have adopted your meaſures by intuition, but I think I know enough of your heart to judge of its ſentiments.

I have ſhewn *Fanny* my Mother's Letter; ſhe ſhed tears over it; but I am convinced it was the anxiety expreſſed in it, rather than the cauſe which made them flow. She has the ſtrongeſt mind I ever yet ſaw in a female. Good God! how weak am I in the balance with her! How do I repine, how do I ſink under the weight of woe! She is all heroiſm, all fortitude. Ever ſo long acquaintance with diſappointment leaves me ſtill defenceleſs to the next.

Every

Every blaſt, every wave, deluges, my poor little tempeſt-toſt bark, while, like the towering rock, *Fanny* ſtands and braves the boiſterous deep; yet her ſenſibility is very accute. What a noble compoſition! Wonder not at my love for her.

As a proof of my weakneſs, I muſt aſk, have you heard lately from *Paris?* Alas! I almoſt fear I am forgotten. That idea overwhelms me in diſtreſs. I know not what I would, or ought to do, but I know no thought torments me equal to that of being no longer remembered with tenderneſs and eſteem; yet if his expreſſions are too tender, I am made miſerable on that account. Alas! I am miſerable every way.

I ſometimes blame myſelf for the indolent acquieſcence, (if I may uſe the expreſſion,) I have ſhewn to the intrigues of my Lord, and Mrs. *Hotham*; not that I believe any extraordinary exertion of myſelf would have prevented meaſures going ſo far as I have all the reaſon in the world to think they have proceeded; but yet I certainly have been too prodigal of the opportunities I have given them. My motive, too, I doubt, was altogether illaudable; his attentions were taken up by her from me; I found a relief by that circumſtance; but I ought to have conſidered, I was conniving at a ſin, in order to avoid an inconvenience.

I have

I have ſeveral times propoſed our going into the country, more particularly, I own, on the account of *Fanny*, but I believe both my Lord and his *Lady* find more opportunities, and leſs hazard of diſcovery in this place, than they expect to meet in the retirement and ſilence of *Cleveland*; not that I by any means think her paſſion for his Lordſhip the ruling one of her ſoul; ſhe is fond of the gay buſtle of high life; ſhe has a ſecret triumph likewiſe in ſeeing a woman, who is admired by ſome folks of taſte, neglected for her. Her vanity muſt be eaſily gratified, that can receive pleaſure from ſo precarious a ſpring. Let me not, however, waſte my time and yours on ſo contemptible a ſubject; ſhe is infinitely below my thoughts or reſentment.

You would not give me credit, my *Louiſa*, were I to ſay your laſt Letter was the moſt pleaſing I ever read; but the hurry in which you wrote, carries the excuſe with it; however, I could not expect intelligence where there was none to relate. You underſtand me; I am very induſtrious in the refined art of ſelf-tormenting.

Yours for ever,

EMMA CLEVELAND.

LETTER XLVIII.

To CHARLES CLEVELAND, *Esq*;

THERE is a ſtrange particularity in your conduct, my dear *Charles*, which, notwithſtanding I have known you ſo long, ſtill ſurprizes me. As to what you have heard of an intimacy with Lord *Cleveland*, I look on that as a *chef d'œuvre* on my ſide. I wiſh, in order to bring my ſchemes to bear, to make his Wife jealous. How many women, of the ſtricteſt virtue, have I known commit a real injury againſt their Huſbands and themſelves, merely to be revenged for a ſuppoſed one. When a beautiful woman, conſcious of her charms, feels herſelf neglected by her Huſband, and has a few outward temptations, ſuch as importunate Lovers, and a favourable opportunity given her, it is next to a miracle if ſhe eſcapes. But while I am thus labouring for you, you ought not to be diſconcerted. I cannot make Lady *Cleveland* believe I am upon *extreme good terms* with her Huſband, without, to be ſure, giving ſome others ſuſpicions; but you ought to be ſatisfied with the aſſurances I have repeatedly given you of my being wholly yours. I will be explicit and candid with you. — I believe my Lord has a little *penchant* for me; leave me to make the beſt of it; he will

will more readily give credit to what I ſhall hereafter advance againſt his Wife. I have provided her with two Lovers; one I mentioned to you before; the other, Lord *Oſwald*, as being more ſpecious, is, I believe, the man fitteſt for my turn. Not that I intend they ſhould proceed to extremities; it would not be your intereſt to have a Divorce take place, as then my Lord might marry again; a final ſeparation will ſuit your purpoſe beſt, and that is what we muſt labour to effect. If I find her virtue proof againſt jealouſy, I muſt take another method, which I have ready in my brain. I have no doubt of deceiving Lord *Oſwald*, and gaining him to my party, and then a few ſuborned witneſſes will do the reſt; ſo at all events you may be ſatisfied of the truth of my former aſſertions, that I will not relax in the affair till every thing is ſettled to my mind. Do not therefore be ſurprized at any thing you hear; wait patiently for the ſolution of any thing which may appear myſterious to you; be aſſured, when I have brought things into a right train, you ſhall have them fully cleared up to you, and, if you are not fully ſatisfied, I cannot help it—You know me well enough, I ſhould think, not to be deceived in me.

Adieu, for the preſent; and conclude me born for your advantage.

ELIZA HOTHAM.

LETTER XLIX.

To Lady LOUISA STRETTON.

HEAVENS! my dear *Louiſa*, what a ſhock I have ſuſtained! Why did you not apprize me of his being in *England?* But perhaps you knew it not. I hardly know what I write; my nerves have not yet recovered the agitation into which the ſight of him has thrown me; I tremble ſtill.

Fanny and I went out this morning to pay a viſit. We were obliged to aſk Mrs. *Hotham* to accompany us; ſhe accepted the invitation. As we were returning, ſhe had a deſire to ſtep into *Chriſtie*'s Sale-Room; I would not have gone, but ſhe inſiſted on it. Lord! I am telling you in a ſtrange, confuſed way; I can obſerve no method, no order. I complained of being tired, and propoſed leaving it; ſhe at laſt complied with my deſire, and as we were coming down the ſtairs, an object, at once the moſt lovely, the moſt deſired, and the moſt dreaded, preſented itſelf before me. Our eyes inſtantly caught each other. My own confuſion was too great to make me ſenſible of his. Fortunately, Mrs. *Hotham*'s attention was called off by ſomebody ſpeaking to her. My amiable *Courtenay*—

tenay—(Oh! *Louiſa*, I muſt ſtill call him ſo,) my *Courtenay* inſtantly took the advantage of her turning her back, and came cloſe up to me. The crowd was too great to render us obſervable, at leaſt I hope ſo. "This is a ſuprize, indeed, (ſaid I to him, in a low voice,) I expected not ſuch a *rencontre*."—"This is no time for explanation, (ſaid he, with a ſolemnity in his manner, which would have chilled my heart, and filled it with unutterable horror, had not the tenderneſs of his looks conveyed ſome comfort to it.) I could not, however, prevent the tear of Apprehenſion, of Joy, and Surprize, from gathering to my eye; his ſeemed moiſtened. He preſſed my hand;—"We are obſerved, (cried he,) give me your addreſs,—you ſhall hear further from me." Luckily I had taken ſome tickets out of my pocket to give to *Chriſtie*, on account of my making a purchaſe, and had one remaining in my hand. I conveyed it to him, unperceived by any one. He mixed with the throng, and I trembled, and tottered down the ſtairs, ready to fall at each ſtep. The agitation of my mind was viſible in my countenance. Mrs. *Hotham* aſked me, what had occaſioned the alteration in my looks? I complained of the heat of the room, and the air of the ſtair-caſe. My dear *Fanny* would

not diſtreſs me by her looks; we ſoon got home. She immediately retired, under the pretence of dreſſing, but I am ſure it was from the moſt delicate motive. I will not conceal a thought from her; ſhe ſhall know every inquietude of a heart ſo tenderly attached to her from principle and affection. I think I may venture to take her advice in every thing. I do not mean to depreciate your merit, my dear *Louiſa*; but *Fanny* has not that impetuoſity in her friendſhip which you have, and which you yourſelf have allowed ſometimes to have thrown you and your friends into perplexing circumſtances.

Thank Heaven, though no more than a week has elapſed ſince the diſcovery of Lord *Oſwald*'s inſincerity, *Fanny* ſeems quite to have recovered herſelf; her fortitude has ſubdued her tenderneſs for him; oh! may it never forſake her!

When I had written thus far, I went to my Siſter's apartment: I found her with a book in her hand.—"My Love, (ſaid I,) you do not tell me whether you congratulate me, or otherwiſe, on the adventure of this morning; ſpeak, my *Fanny*, for my ſpirits are ſtill too much hurried to ſettle whether I ſhould be glad or ſorry. Did you recognize your old Playfellow?"—"I did

did inſtantly, (ſaid ſhe); but I do not think he ſeemed to remember me—I am much altered ſince thoſe days of peace and innocence. But, my dear *Emma*, as you ſay, I do not know whether I ſhould be glad or ſorry on this occaſion."—"Aſſure yourſelf, my beloved *Fanny*, (ſaid I, preſſing her hand,) aſſure yourſelf, my Love, that although he is in *London*, I will never take any Method, directly or indirectly, to ſee him again. I am well convinced our meeting was equally as accidental on his part as on mine. I own all my weakneſs to you. I wiſh to know how he came to *England*; and likewiſe why he wore ſo penſive a look. I cannot ſupport the idea of ſeeing him miſerable, and not breathe a wiſh to have it removed; but I will go no farther. He is the object of my tendereſt eſteem; he deſerves to be ſo—If he ſhould ceaſe to be worthy, I could emulate my *Fanny*'s example, and tear him from my heart without a ſigh. It is my pride to conſider myſelf an object likewiſe of his eſteem and confidence, to know that he need not bluſh at his preference for me; that preference, which makes the only comfort of my life, I could not preſerve, if I did not act with rectitude and virtue. I may boaſt I have done ſo on ſome trying occaſions, and I feel too much ſatisfaction in the genuine

purity of my heart, to forfeit it on any conſideration whatever." — "If I ſpoke with doubt, my dear Siſter, (*Fanny* replied,) it was becauſe you had not explained yourſelf. You ſeemed dubious, I was therefore willing to hear what you thought, and till I did hear, I certainly could not judge whether I ought to be glad or ſorry, as the occaſion of either ſo immediately depended on your own thoughts concerning it. If you can receive pleaſure, unallayed by anxiety, in this adventure, I ſincerely rejoice that it has been ſo eaſily and innocently purchaſed; but if ſtill greater difficulties and troubles ſhould ariſe to cloud the face of my beloved *Emma*, and fill her breaſt with ſighs, I ſhall not ceaſe to lament our going to *Chriſtie*'s as a moſt unfortunate as well as unforeſeen incident."

To have any concealment from this prudent girl would be a degree of ungenerous reſerve; I therefore told her I had given Mr. *C.* my addreſs, and that I hoped to hear from him. I ſhewed her the Letters I had received from him, and laid my heart as clearly before her as it is to the face of Heaven.

I am impatient till I have a Letter from you: You are much in my debt; do not conſtrain me to dun you often. Be aſſured,

my

my dear *Louiſa*, of my perfect eſteem, which can never ceaſe but with my life.

Yours, &c.

EMMA CLEVELAND.

LETTER L.

To Lady LOUISA STRETTON.

THIS morning the incloſed Letter was brought to me; judge, when you have read it, what I muſt have felt on the occaſion, and blame me, if you can, for inſtantly returning an anſwer. I will make no more preface.

To Lady CLEVELAND.

"Your ſurprize, my ever-amiable *Emma*, muſt have been great on meeting me yeſterday, unknowing as you were of my return to *England*. My abſence, however, ſhould not have been ſo long, had I been informed of your leaving the country. Why, my beloved Friend, did you not apprize me of that event? I would have haſtened to you, and watched over your ſteps like your Guardian Angel. Your Letters gave not the leaſt intimation of the change in your ſituation: Perhaps you thought the circumſtance too trivial to find a place in

them. Every trifling circumſtance, however, becomes of conſequence when thoſe we love are concerned.

But now to the cauſe of my quitting *Paris* ſo precipitately.—I by accident became acquainted with a young Nobleman; we were on very intimate terms; on ſome occaſion he ſhewed me part of a Letter from a Friend of his in *England*; while I was looking over it, my eye fixed on the words, *charming Lady Cleveland.* Good God, I exclaimed! Lady *Cleveland*'s name! how ſhould that be mentioned here?—"Why there is a little anecdote concerning that Lady, in which I think my Friend very much to blame." You may believe I now became extremely urgent with him to give me an explanation of words ſo alarming. He found how exceedingly I felt myſelf intereſted, and very kindly let me know as much as he did himſelf. He ſhewed me a former Letter, wherein Lord *Oſwald*, the writer, is laviſh in the praiſes of a beautiful young creature, whoſe name he does not mention; but whoſe charms, (he ſays,) have made an intire conqueſt of his heart. In this he was more explicit; he owns ſhe is married, by what he can learn, and by what he ſees, very unhappily—he has formed a plan to gain her heart by ſome very ſubtle artifices, and then, (he

(ſays,)

ſays,) every thing, he makes no doubt, will follow of courſe. He likewiſe acknowledges he is conſtrained to act the Lover to another, to gain admittance to the charming Lady *Cleveland*. Oh! *Emma!* you, who know my heart, can only judge of the tortures I endured on this occaſion. I know not which paſſion was moſt predominant. I blamed you for practiſing reſerve to your conſtant Friend. Ah! my Beloved, was it kind, was it conſiderate? To what dangers have you been expoſed, and I, your faithful *Courtenay*, a ſtranger to them. Why did you exchange the calm and peaceable retreat of the country for the noiſe and hurry of *London?* where not one moment can be called your own; where, if the tenderneſs of your heart ſhould incline you to the ſoft recollection of your abſent Friend, ſome frivolous amuſement, ſome impertinent viſitor ſhall drive him out; and a giddy round of inſipid pleaſures intirely obliterate me from your remembrance. I inſtantly became a prey to the moſt gloomy preſages;—She abandons me; ſhe leaves me the moſt accurſt of wretches.—I flew to Lord *Stretton*, and haſtily told him I had not a moment to loſe, I could not ſtay to explain myſelf. I was going the next inſtant for *England*, from whence he ſhould hear from me. I threw myſelf

into a chaiſe, and made expedition to *Calais*. I had but juſt left the chaiſe, which brought me from *Dover*, when you ſaw me; I came by accident through *Pall-mall*, in my way from the *White Horſe* in *Piccadilly*. I ſaw a train of coaches at the Auction-room, a ſudden *preſentiment* ſtruck me, that yours might be among them. I fancied I knew your liveries, I was acquainted with your arms. I was proceeding, almoſt dead with perturbation and anxiety, up the ſtairs, when your angelic form ſtruck my ſight. I ſaw you ſome moments before you diſcovered me. Ah! what agitation I underwent! It was ſome conſolation to me, that no Lord *Oſwald* was near you; it was plain he had not been of your party.

That circumſtance was the firſt gleam of ſatisfaction I had taſted ſince my peruſal of Lord *Danver*'s Letter. The tenderneſs which beamed in your lovely eyes almoſt made me forget my errand. Oh! my adorable *Emma*, am I ſtill beloved by you? Am I as dear to you as ever? Has no cruel invader of my peace robbed me of that envied ſhare you once allowed me in your thoughts? Deareſt, lovelieſt of Women, deprive me not of your friendſhip; you know on that depends the only portion of happineſs allotted me. Think what I

ſhall

ſhall endure if I again loſe you? — Again, do I ſay, How infinitely ſuperior will be my diſtreſs now to what it was before? — Your heart, my *Emma*, if I loſe that, I loſe every comfort on earth. The moſt wretched of mortals will then be your

COURTENAY."

My dear *Louiſa*, do not I owe ſomething to the kind Writer of the above? Could I refuſe to give him all the conſolation in my power to give? He demands no more than Virtue and Honour will ſanctify and allow. I have returned him this anſwer.

"IT will be ſome ſatisfaction to my amiable Friend to know that the artful deſigns of Lord *Oſwald*, (which muſt, however, have proved abortive,) were diſcovered before the notice you ſo kindly gave me. How much am I indebted to your tenderneſs! But judge not ſo hardly of me; I would not for a thouſand worlds forego the dear, the innocent delight of dwelling for ever in thought on thy virtues, thy conſtancy, and truth. It is thoſe reflections alone ſupport me through a ſea of troubles. Forgive me, my moſt eſteemed Friend, for not apprizing you of my leaving the country — When I write to you, my whole ſoul is taken up with the idea of my correſpondent: I am lifted

lifted above the clouds, nor can any thing ſublunary have a place in my mind. The coming to town, however, was not a pleaſing circumſtance to me; though in all places I am the ſame, yet there is ſomething ſoothing in the calm retirement of the country; but, believe me, the burſt of tempeſts, or even the wreck of nature could never for a moment drive you from my remembrance —*There* you are ſeated, *there* fixed, never to be removed. Reſt ſatisfied then, thou choſen Friend of my ſoul, nor let vain fears, for vain they muſt be, ever diſturb thee more.

You take no notice of the young Lady with me— Ah! my Friend, have you forgot thoſe times when little *Fanny* was your playfellow, when ſhe uſed to gather you flowers, with which you would fondly dreſs her then happy Siſter? No, thoſe days of felicity are indelibly fixed in my *Countenay*'s mind. The Lady, on whoſe arm I leaned, and who ſweetly and conſiderately turned away her head, was no other than that dear *Fanny*, that amiable Girl. Could you think it, though perhaps your *Emma* then engroſſed all your attention, and you could not beſtow time to view her perſonal charms; but if you were to know her, you would hardly be able to think any Man could be ſo cruel and ſo blind as to attempt to gain her innocent and valuable heart,

only

only to have an opportunity of ingratiating himſelf with me — And yet my angelic *Fanny* is the perſon he means, when he ſays, he was conſtrained to act the Lover to another, to gain admittance to me. My doors have been ſhut to him theſe ten days, and ſhall ever remain ſo. How I deteſt the Wretch who could for a moment give my *Courtenay* room to think his *Emma* abandoned him. No, my generous, my amiable Friend, while virtue and honour guide thy actions, thy *Emma*, thy faithful *Emma*, will never forſake, never one moment ceaſe to remember thee with affectionate eſteem. Suſpect her not; injure not the purity of her tenderneſs with the idea that ſhe can ever change while you remain the ſame. It is my glory, my pleaſure, then to think I never ſhall change — For you, you, my Friend, I know will never change. Thy honour, thy virtue, thy truth, and affection, are immutable, and that certainty ſhall ever convey pure unmixed delight to the boſom of thy *Emma Cleveland*.

Need the moſt amiable of Men harbour any doubts, that the ſenſeleſs tribe I am daily tormented with, can for a moment obliterate him from my mind? No, each moment I turn my diſguſted eye from the hateful groupe, and view his ſpotleſs image

more

more refined, more and more worthy my eſteem, from the compariſons I am able to make. Ah! my *Louiſa*, never heart loved like mine. It is nature, habitual nature in me, and the Creator of all things could as eaſily change his benign diſpoſition to the baleful malevolence of the arch Fiend, as ever *Emma* could falſify her vows and affection.

I congratulate myſelf on having ſo ſoon diſcovered the baſe deſign of Lord *Oſwald*, without putting my dear *Fanny*'s ſenſibility to the bluſh; he has had no cauſe to triumph over the amiable weakneſs of that ineſtimable Girl.

I ſuppoſe you will ſoon have Lord *Stretton* in *England*. He has paid a ſufficient compliment to his Friend; that ſeems an inexplicable affair; I wonder much how it is to turn out.

We have not been in any public place for ſome time, chiefly owing to an indiſpoſition of Mrs. *Hotham* — I am heartily glad of it, as it has given *Fanny* time to recollect herſelf, and prevented us the mortification of meeting a diſagreeable Man.

I am in daily expectation of a letter from your Ladyſhip — Yet your not doing your duty is no example for me, as you find, for I keep ſcribbling on. Your faithful,

EMMA CLEVELAND.

LET-

LETTER LI.

To Lady LOUISA STRETTON.

ANOTHER day and ſtill no news from my *Louiſa* — Is all well? They ſay no news is always good, Heaven grant this may! But I wiſh much to hear from you.

At dinner yeſterday there was a motion made to go to the *Opera*, Mrs. *Hotham*'s I think. As ſhe ſeemed deſirous, my Lord immediately ſeconded it. To the Opera we went; who ſhould we unfortunately meet but Lord *Oſwald*. During the performance he was at the oppoſite ſide of the Houſe. You know it is the *ton* to have little chatting Parties after the Opera in the converſation rooms. Our fate led us into the room where this odious Man was: My Lord took him by the hand, "My dear Lord *Oſwald*, where in the world have you been? You are a perfect ſtranger. The Ladies have been conſtrained to ſtay at home for want of a *Ciceſbeo*." — "The Ladies do me great honour, (he anſwered,) they know I ſhould be but too happy in that office." — "Then recommence to-morrow, (cried my evil Genius, Mrs. *Hotham* I mean,) I want of all things to go

to

to *Bach*'s Concert, and my Lord *Cleveland* has refuſed me." I hardly know what anſwer he made to this very free challenge; I was too much provoked to attend to it. To be driven about juſt as ſhe pleaſes, and, above all, to be reduced to accept of the civilities of a man who had ſo palpably offended both *Fanny* and me, and at the ſame time to awaken apprehenſion in the breaſt of the moſt worthy of his ſex, were difficulties I could not, nor would I ſubmit to. I therefore ſaid very coolly to Mrs. *Hotham*, "I am ſorry, Madam, to break in on your pleaſures, but it is not in my power or inclination to go to-morrow to *Bach*'s; however, I dare ſay you can fix on ſome one who will be happy to attend you." — "Why pray what other engagement have you, Lady *Cleveland?*" aſked my Lord. "Oh! do you expect me to tell you all my engagements?" (I aſked, in my turn, with a ſmile;) "I cannot tell you now, but I have a very particular one, that will prevent me." I ſaw mortification and diſappointment very ſtrongly marked in the features of Lord *Oſwald*; he even turned pale at my refuſal; Mrs. *Hotham*, on the contrary, reddened, ſo unuſual was it to hear me make any objection to a propoſal of hers. Lord *Oſwald* ſaid, "It would conſtitute his higheſt happineſs to be ever near

near us, but that he had an indiſpenſible obligation to go out of town to-morrow, which would detain him for ſome days." The air and manner with which he ſpake this, convinced me, if his eyes had not expreſſed it, that his engagement was only in compliment to my reſolution. Perhaps I am obliged to him for his excuſing himſelf; I certainly got off eaſier by it; but nothing ſhould have prevailed on me to have given the ſlighteſt encouragement to him, after what had paſſed. Mrs. *Hotham* appeared exceſſively uneaſy on the occaſion, but there was no reſource for her, as Lord *Cleveland* really was engaged; ſo at laſt, with a very ill grace, the Lady was forced to give it up. She pouted the whole evening after it. I ſuppoſe there will be ſome difficulty for my Lord to make her amends for her diſappointment; however, let them manage it as they pleaſe; I will neither meddle or make in their affairs.

How much do I long for the time, when we ſhall bid adieu to the gay and deſtructive ſcenes of this Metropolis; but when that event will take place I know not. I wonder Mrs. *Hotham* is not tired of running the ſame round. What variety do we find in hunting all the public places? None. The ſame faces, the ſame converſation, the ſame inſipidity every where.

Ah!

Ah! I am heartily ſick of it. *I am*, do I ſay? I have been ſo from the beginning. Not that I condemn the whole; I think one may receive great pleaſure from a good Play; but then who attends to the Play, whether good or bad? The time is taken up either in ſacrificing the characters and reputations of our acquaintance, or elſe in forming intrigues to the ruin of our own. This is the purſuit and end of a polite life. Ah! Heaven, ſhield me from its impertinences and dangers, and ſend me ſafely into the peaceful country again!

I am not entirely eaſy on *Courtenay*'s account. I am apprehenſive leſt an unchecked inclination to ſee me, as it were by chance, may induce him to viſit ſome of theſe receptacles of vice and folly. Should that be the caſe, his perſon is well known to Lord *Cleveland*. I tremble but to think what the fatal conſequence may be. I wiſh him to quit *London*, and I certainly will hint my deſires to him.

Adieu, my deareſt *Louiſa*.

Yours,

EMMA CLEVELAND.

LET-

LETTER LII.

To CHARLES CLEVELAND, *Eſq;*

IF my former Letters have not been ſo ſatisfactory as you have wiſhed, I hope this will make you ſome amends. The celerity with which I undertake your cauſe and mine, I think now will not admit of a ſcruple on your ſide.—Yes, my dear *Charles*, I think I have made a grand diſcovery—Lady *Cleveland* has a Lover; and in town too; but not of my chooſing—She has one more ſuited to her taſte. I wondered that neither Lord *Belford* nor Lord *Oſwald* could ſucceed; but there was an obſtacle I dreamt not of—a former attachment. I find ſhe was ſacrificed by an avaricious old wretch of a Father to your Couſin, while her heart was firmly devoted to another: That *other* is now in town; ſhe has ſeen him, and I have ſeen him: It ſhall not be your Friend *Eliza*'s fault if ſhe does not ſee him again—Aye, and my Lord ſhall ſee him too. But now I muſt tell you how I made the diſcovery. I found Lord *Oſwald* remitted his viſits all at once; I ſuſpected ſomething, and took an opportunity of ſounding him—He told me he had made ſomething like a declaration—From the

the manner of his repulſe I had no great notion he would ever do — I therefore pitied his Lordſhip, and coolly left him to his deſtiny.

Some time ſince I dragged her, (for you muſt know it is all force, theſe delicate Ladies can do nothing of themſelves,)—I dragged her, then, one morning, to a Sale at *Chriſtie*'s. Coming down the ſtairs I obſerved her countenance change, and likewiſe ſaw a manifeſt confuſion in the features of a very handſome young fellow who was coming up. I pretended to be engaged in diſcourſe with ſomebody near me, to give me an opportunity of obſerving what paſſed. He came up to her, and ſpoke with a low voice. I could find their ſurprize and joy was equal. I ſaw her drop ſomething, for which he ſtooped immediately, and thruſt his hand into his boſom. She trembled ſo as to be ſcarcely able to reach the coach. I took not the leaſt notice, you may be ſure, but I was thoroughly convinced this was no common acquaintance. After dinner I began to ſound my Lord concerning his marriage. I chid him for his indifference to ſo beautiful and virtuous a woman. He ſaid, he allowed her to be virtuous, and, at the time he married her, he thought her beautiful; but that time, which had rendered her beauty familiar,

familiar, likewiſe made him indifferent about it. I gave him a hint, that many women had created great uneaſineſs to their Huſbands, from the ſingle article of having their beauty neglected; "But I am determined, (ſaid he,) not to be made uneaſy." — "You are very ſecure, or very philoſophical, my Lord," I replied. "I have confidence in the virtue of my Wife; in that alone lies my ſecurity." — "Then you are a happy man, my Lord; but do you think the moſt rigid virtue may not be ſhaken, eſpecially if the heart is not attached to the Huſband?"—"Why, as to the heart of Lady *Cleveland*, (ſaid he,) I am too well convinced I never poſſeſſed it; but I adored her perſon, and gained it. I might perhaps have been happier, had I been the man of her choice; yet, I am firmly perſuaded, her virtue is impregnable." — "Heaven forbid any one ſhould ſeek to convince you of the contrary; but what has occaſioned this firm perſuaſion in favour of her Ladyſhip?" — "Her perfect reſignation to my will, and her never having ſeen the man to whom ſhe was attached." — "Was he a handſome man?" — "Men are not judges of beauty in their own ſex." — "Nor more willing to allow it than the women, I believe, my dear Lord; but indulge

dulge the woman in me, ſo far as to deſcribe the perſon of this *once* favoured man."

He is rather above the middle ſize; fine light Hair, and very intelligent Eyes; remarkable white Teeth, and exceedingly well made; an air of Nobility, and, in ſhort, I believe I muſt allow him to be handſome." I was now convinced. "My dear Lord, (ſaid I,) excuſe me, but your Lady has ſeen him ſince her marriage; and this day ſhe ſaw him; I make no doubt but it was mere accident, at leaſt I hope ſo; though I remember a little circumſtance too." — "For God's ſake, what?" he exclaimed, rather alarmed. — "Nay, nothing, nothing, indeed, my Lord, except her being rather unwilling I ſhould accompany her." In ſhort, my dear *Charles*, I had the pleaſure to find I had awakened a little jealouſy in the breaſt of Lord *Cleveland*; who, though he has a faſhionable indifference for his Wife, yet will be eager enough to defend his own honour. He has therefore begged of me to watch her. You may be ſure I ſhall execute my taſk with ſcrutiny. I hope, in a little time, to bring things to a favourable criſis. In ſuch a caſe as this, we muſt not be either ſcrupulous or conſcientious; our affairs demand more enlarged principles: To be ſqueamiſh might now loſe every

advantage

advantage for which we have been labouring.

I deferred writing till now, in hopes I might have informed you I had caught her Ladyſhip tripping; but either her Huſband's confidence in her virtue is well placed, or ſhe is uncommonly prudent; but let it be as it will, I think I ſhall be an over-match for her; ſo let us have no ſcruples raiſed on your ſide, I beſeech you. If you interfere, I will throw up the cards, and leave you to extricate yourſelf the beſt way you can. But I think I may venture to ſay, you have a pretty commodious conſcience, as well as myſelf; ſomething like a *French* glove, which will ſtretch or contract to the ſize of the wearer. Truſt to me, and be ſecure all goes well.

Adieu! Yours,

ELIZA HOTHAM.

LETTER LIII.

To Lady CLEVELAND.

YOU complain of my long ſilence, my deareſt *Emma*; I have various reaſons to aſſign. I have been much indiſpoſed; which account will ſerve to ſhew your maxim of "no news, good news," to be like

all other general rules, not without an exception. Not that I have been very ill; only a violent cold, attended by a little fever, which confined me ſome days to my room.

At laſt my Lord is arrived. He paid a ſufficient compliment to his Friends to leave his deſtined Wife for three months: But I readily excuſe him; nor do I think he has loſt any ground by his abſence. His Letters were extremely flattering to me; and I hope the reception I gave him, bore ſome indication of the pleaſure his preſence occaſioned in me. There was no need of breaking another limb to gain admittance now to the Lady of *Stretton-Houſe*—Indeed, he was a welcome viſitor. Had not your *Courtenay* been in ſuch an outrageous hurry, he might have had his old travelling companion; for Lord *Stretton* ſat out the next week. I told my Lord he was very diſcreet not to divulge the reſult of his embaſſy to me. He very gallantly aſſured me, he meant not to keep this or any other affair a ſecret from me; but that while he was writing to me, he was too well employed in the hope of pleaſing me, by pouring out the ſoft effuſions of his heart, to loſe time in relating the concerns of others; but that now he would fully explain to me whatever might appear myſterious in this buſineſs.

I muſt

I muſt tell you, Lady *Beville* ſhewed very great perturbation when ſhe heard my Lord was expected, and begged, before he had an opportunity of ſpeaking to Sir *Charles*, that ſhe might have the favour of an audience in her dreſſing-room. This conduct, and ſome hints which my Lord had thrown out in his Letters to Sir *Charles*, gave him ſome *preſentiment* of what would follow. He ſeemed greatly agitated, and walked about the room in a very diſordered way. I really pitied him, though I knew not what he had to fear, a ſtranger as I was to the truth of the matter. I thought he might be diſpleaſed if I had taken any notice of his embarraſſment, therefore took an opportunity of quitting the room. As I paſſed the gallery, I heard Lady *Beville*'s voice rather higher than uſual: I could not help hearing ſome words which ſurprized me. In anſwer, I heard my Lord ſay, "You are ſenſible you have acted a very blameable part. I do not accuſe you of inhumanity in making me run the riſk I did in undertaking ſo infamous a cauſe; but I ſhall ever condemn you for drawing in my Friend to ſo ſhameful a connection, and having ſo mean an opinion of me, as to believe I would, for a moment, conſent to his being further deceived."

"Then I am a wretch! (ſhe exclaimed.) —What but ruin and eternal infamy muſt be my portion! But you ought to recollect, my Lord, you yourſelf was inſtrumental to my precipitate marriage with Sir *Charles*; I was willing to have ſtayed till your return."

"It was caution for your reputation, (he replied): I knew not then, that reputation was of no price. You muſt excuſe me for ſpeaking ſo plain."

"Ah! that your words were daggers, every one of them, (ſhe ſaid.) Oh! that I were this moment dead; do not, for God's ſake, my Lord, do not leave me; I cannot bear the thought of ſeeing Sir *Charles*." What more paſſed at that time I knew not, for I was apprehenſive my Lord might come out, therefore I left the Gallery, and went down into the Saloon. After ſtaying ſome little time there, I went into the Parlour wherein I had left *Beville*; I found him laying on one of the ſophas, with the ſame countenance he wore before. I then ſpoke to him; I begged him to tell me, if he was well. "Ah! Madam! (ſaid he,) you ſee before you an unhappy man, who dreads to hear his fate, and yet is anxious to be put out of ſuſpence. To what can this long conference be owing? Why ſhould I not be entruſted with all that concerns my Wife? Lord *Stretton* ſeems myſte-

myſterious to me, while he freely communicates to her the whole of the affair; I know not what to think." — "And I am ſure I know not what council to give you, as you know I am a perfect ſtranger to your manner of becoming acquainted with this Lady, or the motives and deſign of my Lord's undertaking a journey to *Paris*." — "God knows! (ſaid he,) but perhaps it would have been better, had the acquaintance never been made; but I will, as well as I can, inform your Ladyſhip of the commencement of this attachment. —One day I was viſiting the grate of the Nunnery *de St. Cloud*, a little diſtance from *Paris*. I frequently had done ſo; at the time I am ſpeaking of, I ſaw a very elegant figure of a Nun take a Letter from the Portreſs, and was retiring; I gazed at her; ſhe perceived ſhe had attracted my notice, and turning back, removed her veil, which gave me the opportunity of viewing her face; I thought I had never ſeen any thing ſo beautiful; I made a motion to intreat her to ſtay; ſhe ſighed, and threw down her eyes, then, gently raiſing them, ſhe caſt ſuch a glance on me, as ſhot through my ſoul, and immediately turning them on the Portreſs, retired into the Convent. I perfectly underſtood her meaning, and failed not to endeavour to

gain the confidence of the Portreſs by a few *douceurs*, which even thoſe Veſtals are not proof againſt; I gained from her, in return, ſome information of the Lady who had captivated me; ſhe told me ſhe was the Daughter of a man of rank, who had been placed there, becauſe ſhe had refuſed to marry to pleaſe him, and was likewiſe ſuſpected of having an intention of forming a connexion beneath her. Her perſon and ſituation made me very deſirous of gaining the one, by reſcuing her from the other; accordingly I was determined not to reſt till I had effected my ſcheme. I found an opportunity the next day to converſe with my beautiful Nun; I was more and more charmed with her; ſhe appeared not inſenſible to my addreſſes, but informed me, that the indulgence now allowed, of converſing through the grate, would ſoon be denied her, as ſhe was in a few weeks to be profeſſed. On my begging her to tell me if her heart conſented to ſo unnatural a ſecluſion from the world, ſhe burſt into tears, which, for ſome time, prevented her anſwering. What a ſight for a man already far gone in the moſt tender attachment, to ſee the object of his Love in ſuch diſtreſs, and to be debarred the ſupreme delight of wiping from her beauteous face all traces of ſorrow! When ſhe could find words,

ſhe

ſhe aſked me, If I could poſſibly think ſo young a creature as herſelf could bid adieu to all the ſocial enjoyments of life without the greateſt repugnance? But nothing could be done, ſhe muſt ſubmit, and be loſt for ever to all happineſs. Can nothing be done? I demanded, in my turn. Can you not refuſe your aſſent when at the foot of the altar? Can you not give a negative to the interrogation whether you freely conſent or not?"—"Alas! (ſhe replied,) and what would that avail me? I muſt ſtill continue here. No, there is no reſource—unleſs—but—that is impoſſible"—I preſſed her to explain herſelf; I begged her to believe I would riſk my life in her ſervice; that I adored her, and if it was poſſible, by any human means, to extricate her from her priſon, I would devote myſelf and fortune to her; that I was ſingle, and diſengaged till I became acquainted with her; but that her charms and diſtreſs had fixed me for ever hers. My birth and fortune would juſtify her in any favour ſhe might be induced to allow me. In ſhort, I urged every thing a man could, who was as much in earneſt as myſelf. I likewiſe told her I had been informed, that a motive of ſaving her fortune had been one inducement to her parents taking ſo cruel a reſolution; but that I would freely take her

from their hands as ſhe was at this moment; I entreated her permiſſion to addreſs myſelf to her family; and doubted not but my rank in life would engage them to pay ſome reſpect to my ſuit." She anſwered, "She knew her parents too well, to hope ſuch an alteration in them in her favour; that ſhe had no alternative beſide taking the veil, or marrying the moſt hated of all mortals; that it had been alledged againſt her, and as a means of extenuating their cruelty, that ſhe had thoughts of engaging herſelf beneath the rank her family bore; but this was a falſity propagated by them, to deſtroy her in the good opinion of thoſe who had become her Advocates, and wanted to act as Mediators between herſelf and family; ſhe very emphatically lamented her deſtiny; and, amidſt her confuſion and grief, afforded me ſufficient reaſon to believe, that the thought of for ever being ſeparated from me, would be no ſmall augmentation to the miſery allotted her.

In this ſtate of deſpair ſhe left me. I cannot deſcribe to your Ladyſhip the anxiety I felt, till the next day renewed our conference; I then ſwore to ſet her free if the power of man could perform the taſk. She told me, there were many things which might be fixed on, if I had an unſhaken reſolu-

reſolution. Of that, I aſſured her, I was poſſeſſed. I have, (ſaid ſhe) formed a little plan in my own mind—Can you not procure me a doſe that may make me exceedingly ſick, but without impairing my health only for the time?—I will feign myſelf ill, nay, I will ſay I have taken ſomething to rid me from the perſecutions of my parents, and prevent my being buried alive in this cloiſter. You muſt by ſome means get acquainted with Father *Jerome*, who is Confeſſor to our Nuns, (ſhe informed me of his Order, and deſcribed his Perſon to me;) procure his Habit, and copy his Manner; I know he will be ſent for to receive my Confeſſion, and to give me the extreme Unction—you muſt perform that office. When you are once within theſe walls, and have provided yourſelf with a dreſs, the counter-part of what you wear, and which I can diſguiſe myſelf in, leave the reſt to me; fear no danger. Elate with the proſpect of ſeeing a happy iſſue to this buſineſs, I left her to provide for what we wanted. I intruſted my ſecret to two or three of my *Engliſh* Friends, who readily joined with me. By their advice I procured a doſe of ipecacuana for my adventurous Nun, and then we went to viſit Father *Jerome*. Our buſineſs was to take his advice on a caſe of Conſcience. We found him very ready to liſten to us,

eſpecially as we brought ſome excellent wine with us. With this we plied him pretty faſt, and, that we might be more ſecure in his inability, we took care to convey into a bumper ſeveral drops of a compoſing nature. In ſhort, before the ſummons arrived from the Convent, we had the ſatisfaction of ſeeing him intirely overcome, and totally ſpeechleſs. We ſtripped him, and trundled him into his Dormitory. I immediately put on his dreſs, which I rather choſe to wear than the one I brought. I fixed on a beard I provided for the purpoſe, and in a few minutes a whole conventicle of Nuns could not have diſtinguiſhed me from the real *Jerome*. By the time every thing was ſettled, a lay Siſter came from *St. Cloud* in the greateſt haſte, to beg Father *Jerome* would inſtantly repair to comfort the ſoul of a departing ſinner. I readily obeyed the ſummons. I found my Penitent ſick and fainting, ſurrounded by the *Lady Abbeſs*, and ſeveral of the profeſſed Nuns. I underwent a very viſible agitation at this dangerous criſis—I imputed this tremor to the effect of my zeal, and my ſorrow on ſeeing one of my flock ſo fallen, thro' the inſtigation of the devil. I played my part ſo well no one could ſee the impoſture. I told the good Mother I muſt diſcourſe with my Penitent alone, as ſhe might have ſome things

things to divulge, fit only for my private ear. She obeyed me, and I had the ſatisfaction of finding myſelf alone with my Beloved. There is no time to be loſt, ſaid ſhe, riſing from the bed; give me my dreſs. I helped to put it on; ſhe laid her head cloths in ſuch a manner as to give the appearance of her ſtill laying down. When ſhe was dreſſed, I begged ſhe would firſt go out, as I was more apprehenſive for her than myſelf. I had deſired the whole Siſterhood to repair to their Offertories to pray for the departing ſoul of my Penitent, and I knew they paid too implicit a deference to the will of their ſpiritual Father, not to perform his injunctions. My charming Nun paſſed thro' the Cloiſter without encountering any one, till ſhe ſaw the Portreſs. "Go this moment, (ſaid ſhe,) to the *Lady Abbeſs*, ſhe wants you. I have forgot ſomething, give me the keys, and make no delay." I heard the Portreſs paſs the cell where I was; that was a ſignal for me to come out; my Beloved had left the gate open; I paſſed it, and then locked them all ſafely in. I haſted thro' the Square, and reached it almoſt as ſoon as my dear little Adventurer. A coach ſtood ready for us; the Coachman was one of my truſty friends, the Footman was another—the third was at ſome little diſtance off, with a

poſt chaiſe ready for us to proceed to *Calais*. We drew the blinds of the coach and changed our cloaths; the Nun's and Friars habits we bundled up, and threw into a ditch a little way out of the road. In the coach I found a peruke, with a man's hat and ſhoes, and a large *French* great coat, which deſcended to the ancles of my fair companion, and concealed her petticoat. Thus equipped, we travelled on to *Calais*, without moleſtation; from thence we arrived in *England*. I was of opinion that this affair might be ſettled amicably between the Lady's relations and me, provided I had an advocate of credit, I therefore intreated Lord *Stretton* to be the mediator. In the light in which I ſaw it, I thought it would be looked on rather as a youthful frolic, and that after ſome time it would be forgiven.

Lady *Beville* was extremely averſe to Lord *Stretton*'s going abroad, but I own I was reſolute he ſhould go, if he would be ſo kind as to undertake our cauſe. I thought there was no neceſſity for a man of my fortune and rank in my own country to be fearful of addreſſing a *French* Count. I eſteem it as an honour done his family. He could not have expected a better match for his daughter; I would have claimed her, had ſhe permitted me. You muſt have

ſeen,

ſeen, my dear Lady *Louiſa*, that Lady *Beville*'s temper is not ſo amiable as I at firſt thought it; but, indeed, I was a perfect ſtranger to that, and every thing elſe, relative to her. She has loſt all her vivacity lately, and as the time approached for my Lord's arrival, ſhe has grown more and more penſive and capricious in her temper. It is cowardly to complain, as well as uſeleſs, when there is no remedy; but if I had had time to have made myſelf maſter of her diſpoſition, I begin to think I ſhould never have become her Huſband. What hurts me more than all the reſt, is the ſilence of Lord *Stretton*; perhaps he has ſome ill news to relate, and thinks I have not firmneſs to ſupport it. Does he think Lady *Beville* more philoſophical than I am?"—"I make no doubt, Sir *Charles*, (ſaid I) but my Lord will act with his uſual propriety. I fear there may be ſome diſagreeable relations to be made; but, however, you may be aſſured you will have the whole account from my Lord." While I was yet ſpeaking my Lord entered; I was quitting the room, to give him an opportunity of opening his mind to Sir *Charles*. "Where are you going, my deareſt *Louiſa*," ſaid my Lord, taking my hand. "You may ſtay, Madam," (ſaid Sir *Charles*,) I do not wiſh to have a ſecret from my beſt friends." "You may

may ſtay, my dear Couſin, (ſaid my Lord) if you are willing to hear the infamous ſtory of the diſgrace of your Sex." I ſtarted, Sir *Charles* turned pale, and threw himſelf into a chair. "My deareſt *Beville*, (ſaid Lord *Stretton*, going up to him, and preſſing him to his boſom,) you muſt be compoſed; you have been to blame to enter into ſuch haſty engagements—but—you have no Wife."—"No Wife! (he exclaimed,) tell me, tell me, my Lord, what you mean?" "Don't you remember, *Beville*, I once aſked you, in my Letter, if you had never heard the name of *De la Conté* mentioned by Lady *Beville?*" "You did, and deſired I would aſk her that queſtion, and obſerve what ſhe ſaid on it. I acted as you bid me; ſhe underwent ſome agitation of countenance. I demanded who he was? ſhe anſwered, the foundation of all her diſtreſs; he was the man on whoſe account ſhe was put into the Nunnery. I conjectured, nay, perſuaded myſelf, *La Conté* was the man her Parents would have forced her to marry." "She ſpoke truth in ſaying he was the foundation of all her miſery. He was a *Valet* to her Father; ſhe was ſuſpected of an intimacy with him; he was diſcharged, and ſhe was ſent to a relation in the country; they contrived to carry on a correſpondence, and ſhe eloped from her relation; they were diſcovered

covered and ſeparated; ſhe was conveyed to the Nunnery from whence you releaſed her, and he was confined, but found means of eſcaping. She has an independent fortune, which he had the aſſurance to ſue them for; boldly ſaying, had it not been for that he would never have married her, as he had been ſurfeited with her perſon, and unbounded fondneſs before. You ought to rejoice, my dear *Charles*, that you are not legally contracted to ſo infamous a creature: Her Family are reſpectable worthy people; had you given yourſelf the ſmalleſt time to have made inquiries about them, you would have heard ſufficient to have retarded your precipitate adventure, and not have made a mock at every thing ſacred to compaſs ends ſo fatal in their conſequence."

Poor *Beville* really was an object of pity; he knew not how to renounce her; though, as he allowed, and, as I before have ſaid, her diſpoſition was far from amiable, I do believe he ſtill loves her; but my Lord has made it the bond of future friendſhip between them, that he ſees her no more. Lord *Stretton* has ſettled a plan for her future ſubſiſtance, but it is not to be in *England*, neither is Sir *Charles* to know what becomes of her. He has been very ill for ſome days, and is ſtill too weak to leave his room. My Lord takes part in his ſufferings; he has too

too much impetuoſity in his temper, like ſomebody elſe of your acquaintance; but this adventure, I think, will damp him. He has many good qualities; I hope he will ſoon recover, and when he has time to look about him, will find ſome more worthy object to fix his affections on. So I will here conclude the hiſtory of the young *Widower-bewitched*.

I think you came off nobly with reſpect to your Enamarato, Lord *Oſwald*; upon my word you have the method of repulſing them nicely. Why don't you get rid of that Mrs. *Hotham?* I dread her intriguing ſpirit; ſhe is a devil, take my word for it; that is a pretty term to give a Lady, to be ſure, but I believe it expreſſes her character in one word. I am glad ſhe did not ſee *Courtenay*. Her penetrating genius would have diſcovered the emotions in your countenance, and judging, a little by herſelf, ſhe would have ſuſpected a great deal, and probably reported ſtill more. I am in love with your ſweet *Fanny*. Dear noble Girl, preſent my kindeſt wiſhes to her.

Remember me to *Courtenay*, if you ſhould again write to him; you are exemplary Lovers. Your reward muſt be in Heaven, ſince, I think, nothing leſs can repay you both for what you have ſuffered in this world.

world. His remaining in town will be of no ſervice, as I am certain neither he nor you, will think it prudent to riſk a ſecond meeting. If you write to him ſoon, tell him his Friends here want much to ſee him. Poor *Beville* ſtands in need of a tender ſympathiſing Confidant. My Lord is now too buſy to afford him much of his company; our dear *Edward* then muſt come to us. A little excurſion about the country may diſpel the melancholy of the Baronet. I would not for the univerſe urge a ſeparation between you and our amiable Friend, but that I know you would be eaſier to be rid of the apprehenſion of ſeeing him. It is wholly impoſſible for either of you to meet without betraying the emotions which the ſight of perſons ſo dear will naturally give birth to; you may be obſerved, and the baleful eye of Suſpicion magnifies all objects. My *excellent* Couſin may enlarge his *precious* qualities, by adding Jealouſy to the liſt; your ſituation would then be ſuch as all your friends muſt deplore. I ſincerely hope his indolence and indifference will ſecure him from ſuch a dangerous paſſion. Could he view your heart, he would be ſatisfied of its purity; but penetration is not among his accompliſhments, and if he draws his knowledge from his own ideas, I doubt you would not be acquitted in his mind.

Heaven

Heaven preſerve you, my beloved Friend, and conduct you to happineſs! Adieu!

LOUISA STRETTON.

LETTER LIV.

To CHARLES CLEVELAND, *Eſq*;

A Prize, a prize, my dear *Charles*; I have procured a letter*, which will be of the moſt infinite ſervice to us in our enterprize. When people embark in ſchemes of ſuch a nature as ours, they muſt not be over ſcrupulous about the means of accompliſhing the ends propoſed. My conſcience then abſolved me eaſy enough, but I could not find any method which bore the face of probable ſucceſs — Chance, or, perhaps, ſome more powerful Agent, yeſterday put her Ladyſhip in my power, and if I do not uſe it to my advantage, diſown me for ever for a Siſter of intrigue. Yeſterday then, (lucky be the day!) I ſaw one of Lord *Cleveland*'s Footmen, with a packet in his hand. — "For whom is that *James?*" I aſked. — "For my Lady, Madam; it is a Letter." — "Give it to me, I am going to your Lady, and will deliver it." I took it from the fellow, and proceeded to my own room, where, locking myſelf in, I began to examine my prize; I found I muſt have re-

* The above.

courſe

courſe to an old ſubterfuge, which I have formerly been obliged to practiſe with ſome of my *late Beloved*'s Letters, when I have had any ſuſpicion of his receiving intelligence concerning you; in ſhort, I have an admirable knack of drawing the ſeal, ſo as not to be diſcovered. Here I found a long account about an unfortunate Baronet, to which you may believe I did not pay much attention, only ſkimming it over, to come to the part which moſt concerned myſelf — Yes, myſelf, I repeat — I am prettily handled, I aſſure you, by that impertinent Minx, Lady *Louiſa Stretton*. *Why don't you get rid of that Mrs.* Hotham? She dreads my *intriguing ſpirit*; *ſhe is a devil, take my word for it.* She allows this to be a harſh term, but meant to give my *character in one word.* She rejoices that I did not ſee *Courtenay*, as judging by myſelf I ſhould have ſuſpected a great deal, and reported more. Take care, my *precious Louiſa*, this *devil*, be ſure, will be too much for you, and your *truly virtuous* and *amiable* Friend. Why this *Louiſa* is abſolutely an intriguer too. She ſeems to have a pretty notion of things. She deſires to be remembered to *Courtenay*, on the preſumption of Lady *Cleveland*'s writing to him. What can the delicate, the virtuous, the noble minded Lady *Cleveland* hold a correſpondence with a man! Aſtoniſhing! If

ſhe

ſhe can write, would ſhe not meet him if ſhe could? Undoubtedly. Let me alone to plan their meeting; yes, they *ſhall* meet, and that very ſoon; for the cautious *Louiſa* wants her Friend to perſuade *our dear Edward* to leave town, as ſhe knows the *purity* of their amiable hearts too well, not to be aſſured they would never think of meeting by deſign; but at public places, or elſewhere, ſhould they unfortunately have ſuch a *rencontre*, their emotions might diſcover them. They are *diſcovered*, my dear prudent Spinſter, already. I am overjoyed that I am miſtreſs of this intelligence; it will be the match by which I ſhall ſpring the mine. This will be an incentive; this will haſten meaſures, leſt he ſhould follow his Deary's advice, and leave town before our ſcheme is brought to bear. Let him then leave town, and follow his deſtiny elſewhere; when my turn is ſerved, I care not what becomes of him. — When I had made what uſe I could of this precious *morçeau*, I conveyed it to the unſuſpecting hands of her Ladyſhip.

I told you before, I had found there was a ſpark of jealouſy in the compoſition of Lord *Cleveland*. I have given a few more hints, juſt to feed the flame, without making it blaze; it would be too ſoon yet, and we might be involved in the general conflagration.

gration. In the evening yeſterday, I gave my Lord reaſon to believe that her Ladyſhip had been talking ſome time at the Play with a Gentleman very like ſuch a perſon as he had deſcribed Mr. *Courtenay* to be. It pleaſes me to ſee with what avidity he ſwallows the poiſonous draughts I pour out to him. He readily believes each word I advance, and fancies my tenderneſs for him, that is to ſay, my natural tenderneſs of heart, makes me conceal more from him than I inform him of. Matters will ſoon be brought to a criſis; we ſhall all ſoon be ſatisfied; your doubts and ſcruples, my dear *Charles*, will ſoon be removed, and then you will know me for what I am, *&c.* Adieu.

ELIZA HOTHAM.

LETTER LV.

To CHARLES CLEVELAND, *Eſq;*

ONE Letter more, to inform you the deciſive blow is ſtruck. This is the copy of a *Billet-doux*, which, as Lady *Cleveland* neither wrote, nor indited, ſhe may think ſhe has no obligation to me for; but I look not for thanks from her, my views are much more exalted; kind Fortune ſecure but theſe views to me, give me this triumph, and, Fate, I defy thee.

"*My*

"*My dear Mr.* COURTENAY,

"I am desired, by our Friend *Louisa*, to request you to go to *Stretton-House*; they want you much there, to comfort your old Companion, Sir *Charles Beville*; but, before I proceed farther, I think it very necessary to inform you, that I have disabled myself from writing, by having sprained my wrist very much, therefore my Sister *Fanny* is so kind as to be my Secretary. If I had not explained this, you would be at a loss to judge why my handwriting should be changed.

"I think, with Lady *Louisa*, that it is dangerous for you to continue in town, as your person, you well know, is no stranger to my Lord. I am eternally forced, by the inclinations of Mrs. *Hotham*, to go to public places, and should I happen to see you there, or any where else, I could not be able to conceal the emotions which your presence ever excites; and yet, dare I own it to you, I cannot tell how to bid you quit a place, wherein I am constrained, for the present, to be. Why has cruel Fate forbid our spending our days together? What advantage, however, is it to complain? I cannot shake off the least particle of misery by it. You know not how unhappy I am. Lady *Louisa* will give you the

the character of Mrs. *Hotham* better than I can. It is to her I owe the unhappineſs I at preſent lament, but which I cannot communicate by letter. I know the purity of your heart, or I would not venture to make a requeſt, which, to any other than you, would be highly imprudent. My amiable *Courtenay*, I muſt ſee you for one quarter of an hour before you leave town. The day after to-morrow I know both my Lord and Mrs. *Hotham* will be engaged. I have a ſervant in whom I may confide; ſhe will introduce you, at five in the afternoon, into my dreſſing-room; wait there a little. I mention that hour, becauſe we ſhall all then be in the dining parlour, which will give you an opportunity of coming in unobſerved. I have ſome very affecting circumſtances to relate. I ſhall expect you to mingle your tears with thoſe of your

EMMA CLEVELAND.

P. S. If you find this letter different from my former ones, attribute it to the diſtreſs I am under at preſent, and the inability of my hand. One cannot indite for another, ſo well as one does for one's ſelf. Adieu.

Well, *Charles*, don't you think this will bring the *dear Edward?* Sure it cannot fail.

fail. I am hardly able to breathe for eager expectation. I have not time to throw away, or I would amply revenge myſelf on my picture-drawer; but it muſt be ſufficient for me to wound her through the boſom of her Friend. Heaven knows, I have no malice againſt Lady *Cleveland*, only as ſhe is an obſtacle to my happineſs, and your views. We muſt proceed in the way we began. Oh! *Charles*, how does my heart beat high againſt my ſide, when I think what will be the reſult of all this! When all our toils are ſo nobly rewarded, all our nightly watchings thus repaid! I even carry my roving thoughts ſtill further; ſuppoſe the enraged Huſband ſhould, like Lord *L*—, draw his ſword, ſhould his antagoniſt's arm prove victorious, how eaſily then would you ſtep into the Title and Eſtate? Are you not fired at the idea? You ſee how deep I reflect for your advantage. Adieu, my dear *Charles*; who ſhall deſcribe our next meeting?

Yours, as much as poſſible,

ELIZA HOTHAM.

LET-

LETTER LVI.

To Lady CLEVELAND.

OH! my *Emma!* my unfortunate undone Child, what an account has your Father juſt received from Lord *Cleveland!* To what fatality has it been owing, that you ſhould ever have renewed an acquaintance, it was ſo much your duty to avoid? What becomes of me, when I reflect that my Child, the darling and ſupport of my life, is accuſed of injuring the honour of her Huſband! Oh! this is too, too much for the anxious boſom of a Mother to bear; I will not, no, *Emma*, I will not think you ſo guilty as you are ſtiled. But what extenuation can you make? Could your intentions be virtuous in introducing into your dreſſing-room the man of all others you ſhould never have ſeen? Oh! that you never had ſeen him, what anguiſh would you have ſaved your wretched Mother — wretched in having given birth to a Child who is charged with diſgracing her family! How has Virtue forſaken your boſom? By what means have you kept up a correſpondence with the companion of your ſhame? So good, ſo amiable as you once was! ſtill, ſtill I cannot think you guilty. But you have

been imprudent, *Emma*. It is not always the act which conſtitutes the guilt; the intention is equally culpable. Oh! I remember you once ſaid, "Fear me not, my dear Mother, though the diſtreſſes of your Daughter has drawn tears from your Eyes, and the Sigh of Anguiſh from your boſom, her conduct through life ſhall never call a bluſh on your cheek. The Law of God ſhall ever be the rule of my conſcience, and my conſcience ſhall ever be a check on the actions of my life." Ah! my Child, how has your preſent proceedings contradicted the ſweet conſolation you then poured into the boſom of your ſorrowing Mother; but I never knew diſtreſs till this day. Oh! that it had pleaſed the Almighty to have cloſed the painful page of my life yeſterday! I cannot deſcribe your unhappy Father's behaviour; you know how nice his notions of female honour are. Good God! to have our Child ſtigmatiſed, branded with infamy, it is too much, too much for parents to ſupport.

I know not what I have written; perhaps with too much ſeverity. Have I charged my Child with infamy? Oh! forgive me, my *Emma*, you cannot be guilty; Oh! what a word is that! your Father, with a fatal precipitancy, judges, I hope, much, much worſe than the caſe really is; but

but he forms his reaſons from your Lord's Letter. I will copy it, that you may know *his* real ſentiments.

"SIR,

"I feel all the ſorrow which an injured Huſband can experience, in being forced to complain of a Wife, once tenderly loved and eſteemed. Yes, Sir, I am that injured Huſband. I too well knew, when I entered into my fatal engagements with your Family, that the heart of your Daughter was pre-diſpoſed of, yet I hoped her Virtue and Honour would ſecure mine, and that in time I might gain her heart. I have this day received convincing proof of her diſhonourable behaviour; ſhe has followed the example of too many of her infamous ſex; I muſt be obliged to take meaſures accordingly. She has kept up a correſpondence with *Courtenay*, who is the man that has defiled my bed. I am going to lodge a Petition againſt her in the *Commons*; I cannot tamely ſit down a contented Cuckold. Pardon the inconſiſtencies of this Letter. You muſt have an idea that I am very much agitated from this diſcovery.

"I think it will be adviſable for you to ſend for Miſs *Woodville*; it will injure her reputation to continue in this houſe with her Siſter, whoſe infamy is ſo flagrant. As

to Lady *Cleveland*, I ſhall ſend her down to a relation I have in the country, on the border of *Wales*, till I have obtained a Divorce in due form.

I remain, Sir, your obedient,
and much-diſtreſſed

CLEVELAND."

I dare not dwell too much on the Letter before me; my ſenſes are bewildered. For Heaven's ſake, write to me! You never, from the earlieſt years, deviated from the ſtricteſt truth, I will then implicitly believe what you ſhall relate. Oh! that my child may be able to clear herſelf from theſe fatal aſperſions! On my knees I offer my petition to the Throne of Mercy, that I may be ſo comforted. I have intreated my Son *Brereton* to take care of your Siſter *Fanny*; but I will not, I cannot entertain ſuch harſh thoughts of my once-adored *Emma*; once! did I ſay? Oh! does not my heart, at this moment, overflow with a Mother's fondneſs? Still you are my child, and, though I muſt cenſure, muſt condemn, yet ſtill I feel I pity you. I can write no more.

Your truly-diſtreſſed Mother,

C. WOODVILLE.

LET-

LETTER LVII.

To Lady LOUISA STRETTON.

THE moſt forlorn of men takes this opportunity of acquainting you, that the vileſt machinations have taken place to ruin the character of your amiable Friend. Dear hapleſs victim to the baſeſt perfidy, how does my heart bleed for thy wrongs! They ſhould not go unpuniſhed, did not my reſpect, my tenderneſs for her, prevent and reſtrain my arm. Alas! you know not the fatal cauſe of my grief.—I am torturing you by keeping up the rack of ſuſpence — Let me be methodical, if poſſible.

I informed your Ladyſhip of my having met the loveliеſt of women, by chance, at *Chriſtie*'s; of the Letter I wrote, and the Anſwer I had the honour to receive. Two days ſince I had a Billet put into my hands; the writing I was a ſtranger to, but found it was dictated by our Friend; the contents excited both my curioſity and fear. [*Mr.* Courtenay *here copies the Letter which Mrs.* Hotham *forged.*] My dear Lady *Louiſa*, you ſee the urgency with which it was written; at all hazards I was determined to comply with the requeſt of her, for whom I would lay down my life. At the hour

appointed I repaired to the houſe of Lord *Cleveland*. A Servant-maid conducted me, with trembling limbs and beating heart, into her Lady's Dreſſing-room. Here I continued alone near a quarter of an hour. What perturbation ſeized me when I heard the door open! But who can deſcribe my emotions, when the adorable *Emma* preſented herſelf before me? Judge of my aſtoniſhment, when ſhe uttered a ſhriek on ſeeing me. "What do I ſee! (ſhe exclaimed)—How have you raſhly ventured to break your promiſe to me! A promiſe, on which I ſo truly relied." To exculpate myſelf from the imputation of doing the moſt trifling thing which might offend her, I produced the Note.—"Think, moſt revered of women, that your mandate alone could induce me to approach your preſence—On no other conſideration would I have obtruded on it—But, thus urged, where is the danger I would not freely embrace?" She caſt her eyes over the note, and, burſting into tears, "Oh! *Courtenay!* (ſaid ſhe,) we are undone; ſome invidious betrayer has wrought our ruin; I ſee it all before me. This is a baſe forgery; but the conſequences will overwhelm us."—I begged her to compoſe herſelf; I threw myſelf on my knees before her, and ſwore I would defend her with my life; that it

was

was impoſſible the moſt diaboſical malice could fix a ſtain on her character, which had ever been ſo pure."—She was too much agitated to attend to me—" Leave me, leave me, (ſhe ſobbed,) while yet you can quit this fatal place with ſafety; each moment I dread the meditated tempeſt to fall." I preſſed her almoſt lifeleſs hand to my lips, ſtill on my knees. While I was thus employed, the door again opened, and inſtantly the infernal Mrs. *Hotham*, the woman who let me in, and another female Servant, appeared in the room. " I beg your pardon, Madam, (ſaid the Devil *Hotham*, with a ſneer,) I knew not you had ſuch good company. Indeed, my Lord has many obligations to you." I aroſe on their entrance. " Your plot, vile woman, (cried I,) you ſee, has taken in part; but beware, I may yet find a time to revenge myſelf, and that moſt virtuous and moſt injured of women."—" Sir, (ſhe replied with great coolneſs,) I come not here to argue, or to liſten to your invectives; my buſineſs is accompliſhed—I am ſatisfied in what I wanted to know. You, (continued ſhe, turning to the ſervants,) you will be ready, when called upon, to atteſt what you have ſeen." The poor injured *Emma* ſat like a ſtatue transfixed with the deepeſt woe. " Vile wretches! (I exclaimed,) I

cannot doubt but that you are ſuborned by that ſtill viler woman, to anſwer ſome infamous purpoſe of her's; but beware, when you give your teſtimonies, leſt truth ſhould be violated. Hear me and tremble; that I will purſue you to the utmoſt boundaries of the earth, but I will puniſh your perjuries, if you ſhould dare to utter them." "Say no more, ſay no more, (cried the forlorn *Emma*,) leave an unfortunate wretch to her fate. I truſt in Heaven that it will not forſake me in this exigence; our innocence will ſhine ſuperior to their malice. Farewell, my fellow-ſufferer, let not paſſion get the better of your reaſon; take no raſh methods; if I have any influence over you, let me, on my knees, beſeech you to reſt our cauſe in the hands of the Almighty, and not, by any act of violence, draw on us the deſerved cenſure of the world." Diſtracted with her ſituation I urged her to riſe. She did, on the condition that I would inſtantly leave the houſe. I obeyed, after having aſſured her, I would take Lord *Stretton*'s advice in every thing I ſhould do. The infamous wretches made no oppoſition to my quitting the houſe; but I can have no doubt they have already framed a ſtory for the ear of Lord *Cleveland*, if he is not even one of the plotters. Ah! that my arm was not tied! that I could make him,

in

in part, feel the anguiſh, the agonizing affliction that at this moment rends the boſom of your

EDWARD COURTENAY.

LETTER LVIII.

To CHARLES CLEVELAND, *Eſq;*

A Short Letter, juſt to tell you I have ſucceeded to my utmoſt wiſhes. I took care to ſurprize the Lovers together. I had Witneſſes too, but upon my life an oath or two muſt not choak them. They may, indeed, ſafely ſwear they ſaw them both in a room; but as to any circumſtance to build facts on, I muſt be indebted to the fertility of my own brain; for her Ladyſhip and her own Daughter could not be more innocent. However, I had the addreſs to make the critical appearance while yet the hurry and aſtoniſhment of their meeting had cauſed a perturbation in their looks and words. I think, nay I know, I can make the *Abigails* ſay what I pleaſe; they are devoted to me on many accounts.

Now, my dear *Charles*, we ſhall triumph indeed. My Lord is made acquainted with the intereſting particulars. We have

been cloſetted with our Witneſſes. Your Couſin, though he has been taught to expect this ſome time, was nevertheleſs greatly affected. There is a perverſity in human nature which will not be ſatisfied with letting any one enjoy a bleſſing, notwithſtanding we are ourſelves tired of it. Indeed he ſeems ſo little to reliſh the idea of becoming one of the branched herd, that, as Sir *Paul Pliant* ſays, I fear he will not cut his horns kindly, he will certainly die in the breeding. But to more weighty buſineſs. I can hardly tell how we are to proceed. The Lady is under cloſe confinement in her own apartment at preſent, but I believe we ſhall ſend her down to your old Aunt *Elizabeth*, in *Wales*. A ſweet ſituation we have found for her, have we not?

She ſeems to bear her misfortune with great reſignation. I do believe conſcious innocence is a firmer ſupport in the day of affliction than I had any notion of. But her ſevereſt trial is not yet come: I mean her ſeparation from her Child; I think that will effectually humble her. 'Pſhaw, I am running from my ſubject ſtrangely; my ſpirits are not yet ſubſided. You ſhall ſoon again hear from your

ELIZA HOTHAM.

LET-

LETTER LIX.

To Lady LOUISA.

BEHOLD the victim of the baſeſt treachery and blackeſt forgery, once more going to fill the mournful page with the recital of her ſufferings. I can hardly doubt but that you are already informed of the ſtorm which has overwhelmed me, by one who has been drawn in to feel a full ſhare of my misfortunes. Oh! my *Louiſa*, think what is my diſtreſs, after the many hard trials I have experienced, to have my fame torn in pieces by the malevolent world, to be by its cruel and deciſive word conſigned to ignominy, and ranked with the loweſt and vileſt of wretches!

Early in life driven from the remoteſt hope of ever taſting felicity, my only conſolation reſted on the aſſurance of paſſing through my deſtined ſtate of exiſtence with the approbation and praiſe of all who knew me; but this conſolation, though the only one, was too exquiſite a ſatisfaction for the *Child of Sorrow*. My enemies envied me the ſmall comfort I had, and laboured to rob me of the laſt remains of happineſs — How they have ſucceeded the ſad event too fatally teſtifies. Yes, my *Louiſa*, as to this ſublunary world I am undone for ever.

The world, my Dear, is too frequently miſtaken, but who can appeal from its decrees?

A ſtranger, as I before have ſaid, to every proſpect of joy, I thought to have glided through life unobſerved, and ſurely unenvied. But yet I poſſeſs bleſſings which they can never, never deprive me of, a conſcience void of ill doing. Oh! merciful God, in all my hardſhips and trials preſerve my integrity, and I will bow my neck beneath thy chaſtiſements, and bleſs the hand which afflicts me.

You will perhaps, my Dear, wonder at my reſignation, believe me it is not the work of a moment; no, a length of time has been neceſſary, joined to the utmoſt of human methods, to calm the tumult in my ſoul, and huſh it into ſome degree of peace. But, my *Louiſa*, I have another cauſe. I feel within myſelf a moral certainty that I ſhall not live much longer, either to excite the malice of my bitter enemies, or encounter the ills their cruelty has brought on me.

What my perſecutors mean to do with me I am a ſtranger to — At preſent I am under confinement. Yes, *Louiſa!* harſh as that ſounds, I am ſtrictly confined; and though I am allowed the uſe of my pen, I know not that what I write will ever reach your hands. However that may be, I truſt that I ſhall

ſtill

ſtill hold the ſame place in your friendly boſom. You know my innocence. Let me intreat you to inform my poor Mother of every tranſaction of my life; for her own peace of mind, as well as to exculpate my beloved *Fanny*, I would wiſh her to be ſenſible of my cruel treatment. My tears flowed, and my heart bled over her laſt Letter; I would have anſwered it, but at that time my diſtreſs was too exquiſite, nor could I procure a ſheet of paper, unleſs I had condeſcended to beg it of the infamous *Hotham*, or bribed a Servant to procure me one.

I cannot doubt but that you know all that paſſed while your unhappy Friend was in this fatal houſe, as I begged he would be guided by Lord *Stretton*; I ſhall then paſs over that occurrence, to inform you of the concluſion of the ſcene. At that period of time my dear Siſter was abſent, by a ſcheme which likewiſe had been concerted, and into which ſhe fell. She returned, however, ſoon after, and heard a confuſed account of the affair below, for theſe agents of iniquity had taken care to publiſh the tranſaction, with many additions; the dear Girl flew into my arms, and ſought to pour the balm of comfort into the wounded ſoul of her ſorrowing Siſter. While ſhe was hanging over me my Woman entered the room, and

begged

begged I would give her the keys of my bureau. Overwhelmed with diſtreſs, and, hardly knowing what I did, I drew them from my pocket. *Fanny* obſerved me, and haſtily taking them from me, "What are you about to do? (aſked ſhe,) who dares demand theſe keys?"—"I have orders, Madam, from my ſuperiors, to requeſt them of her Ladyſhip."—"Let your *ſuperiors* then in *iniquity* do their own meſſages, they ſhall not be delivered to you, nor any one elſe, while I have life to keep them." Alas! my Love, ſaid I, how impotent, how vain are your ſtruggles againſt the power of the mighty! We muſt not contend with them."—"No one, my beloved Siſter, (ſhe replied) can have a right to pry into your concerns but Lord *Cleveland*; I ſhall not detain them from him, but to him alone will I deliver them."—*Wilſon* left the room. In a few moments in came the baſe promulgator of all this miſchief, with the utmoſt ferocity of countenance. "So, Miſs *Woodville*, you will not give up the keys, I find—well, well child, we have other methods;—here, continued ſhe, ſpeaking to a Man whom ſhe called in, Wrench open the deſk." I think the revolution of ages will never obliterate what followed. *Fanny* flew from my ſide, and ſnatching up a poker, which was heated by having been in the fire,

fire, haſtily ran to the bureau, where leaning over it with her left hand on the lock, ſhe brandiſhed her newly-acquired weapon in her right, "Now let me ſee, (cried ſhe, her eyes ſparkling with rage,) now let me ſee who will dare approach this place. I ſwear, by the eternal Creator of the world, to lay any one dead at my feet that ſhall preſume to violate this ſanctuary." No one dared to moleſt her, as I believe ſhe would have put her threats in execution if they had proceeded to violent meaſures. "It is not (ſaid ſhe) that I am fearful of any thing here tranſpiring to the prejudice of my injured Sifter, but that I am reſolved all her papers ſhall remain ſafe, either in her own poſſeſſion, or in that of my Lord. But thou, thou wretch, (continued ſhe, darting a furious look at Mrs. *Hotham*,) thou ſhalt never have them, ſince I know thou wouldſt deſtroy thoſe ſacred witneſſes of my Sifter's virtue." I had hitherto ſat a mournful ſpectator of the tumultuous ſcene before me; I now eſſayed to ſpeak.—"My deareſt *Fanny*, (cried I,) I feel myſelf for ever indebted to you for your goodneſs; but your zeal, my Love, tranſports you to too great lengths. You will further irritate my enemies againſt me. I can never believe theſe people act without the ſanction of my Lord; they could not dare to treat

treat me with theſe indignities, unleſs by his authority. They mean to cruſh me under their feet; let them ſucceed; I have already lived too long." — "Your meekneſs (ſaid *Fanny*) has given theſe infernal wretches this power over you. Oh! that you poſſeſſed ſome degree of my ſpirit! their daſtardly ſouls would have ſhrunk from the danger they would have dreaded in my vengeance. But *I* will be your champion, your ſecond ſelf. Yet, my ſuffering Siſter, I will be guided by you; I will, if you pleaſe, deliver up theſe papers to Lord *Cleveland*."—"I have not a wiſh (ſaid I) to conceal them from him; he may do what he pleaſes both with them and me. If he can be baſe enough to join the vileſt of women to work my ruin, I have nothing to hope from his mercy or juſtice."

"You allow me, then, to give up all the papers, without examination, to your Lord?"—"Moſt freely." — "Hear this, ye abettors of falſhood, hear this, and receive it as the ſtrongeſt proof of injured Innocence; ſhe gives up the contents of this deſk, where are kept all the Letters, wrote in the full ſecurity of confidential friendſhip; theſe ſhe reſigns to the inſpection of her cruel enemies." Saying which, ſhe took the keys from her pocket, and unlocked the deſk. Mrs. *Hotham* was approach-

proaching; "Keep off, (cried *Fanny*,) ſtir not, for your life." She muttered, "ſhe ſhould find a time for revenge." *Fanny* took out all the Letters ſhe could find, and putting them into her apron, again locked the bureau, and brought me the keys. "Keep them, my Love, till my return; I go to deliver them into Lord *Cleveland*'s poſſeſſion." — "Be calm, my *Fanny*, for my ſake." — "Fear me not, my deareſt *Emma*, I will ever keep your welfare in view." When ſhe left me, all comfort ſeemed gone with her. I threw myſelf into a chair, and leaning my head on a table, gave a free vent to my over-burthened heart. After ſome time, my dear *Fanny* again returned to me; ſhe ſat herſelf down oppoſite to me, in the deepeſt ſilence. I fixed my eyes on her, and ſaw ſo great an alteration in her countenance as almoſt terrified me to death, and totally deprived me of utterance. At laſt, in a tremulous tone of voice, I aſked the cauſe of the mournful preſage before me? Her effort towards ſpeech was too much; a flood of tears poured from her eyes. "My ſpirits, (ſaid ſhe, when ſhe could ſpeak,) my ſpirits no longer ſupport me; they are now ſubdued; they will tear me from you. Lord *Cleveland* has diſpatched a courier to my Father's; he will no longer ſuffer me to remain

remain with you, than till he is informed by my Parents where to ſend me. He has done more; he took the papers from me, and, without looking over them, conſigned them to the care of the Devil *Hotham*. "I have ſufficient evidence of her guilt, (ſaid he,) without applying to theſe proofs." — "On my life and ſoul, (ſaid I,) from theſe you will only receive proofs of her real innocence."—"Yes, and of yours too, I ſuppoſe, (ſaid he, with a ſneer,) but my meaſures are taken. I expect, by the return of the Meſſenger, to be informed how I am to proceed on your account; I ſhall not allow her to have an agent of her ill practices ſo near her; it will be better for you to be under the protection of your Father and Mother. Would to God I had never ſeen or known any of you! You may ſpend the little time you have to ſtay, together, but I will have no plotting. I inſiſt on having your Siſter's keys, as well as your own, delivered to Mrs. *Hotham*; ſhe is now Miſtreſs of this houſe. I expect compliance, or I ſhall not ſtay for directions from your Father, but ſhall ſend you down immediately."—"Thus you ſee, my deareſt Siſter, (added ſhe,) how I am circumſtanced; my ſpirit, which flew out for your ſake, is for your ſake now entirely broken; I gave up my keys without uttering a word; you

you muſt likewiſe reſign yours." I ſaw it was in vain to contend. I rang my bell; and putting the keys into the hand of a Servant, "bid him carry them to his Lady." The man ſtared; "To Mrs. *Hotham*, (continued I,) ſhe is now your Lady." — "I am heartily ſorry for it," ſaid he, with a deep ſigh, and I thought I ſaw a tear gliſtening in his eye. — "They ſeek to break my heart, I find, cried I. What ſhall I do when I loſe my *Fanny?* But how ſhall I ſupport the idea of your being harſhly treated by my Father? There, oh there, they tear my ſoul indeed!"

We paſſed the remainder of the night in mutual diſtreſs. Next morning *Wilſon* told me, a Gentleman of the Law, by order of my Lord, was to wait on me. "I am not in a condition, (ſaid I,) to make the leaſt oppoſition to the orders of his Lordſhip, or I ſhould certainly have had ſome other Servant to deliver this meſſage; but no matter; I ſubmit. Introduce the Gentleman." Ah! my dear *Louiſa*, it was Doctor ——, from the *Commons!*" He had too often been employed in cauſes of this nature, where there had been real guilt, and, void of delicacy or humanity, he entered abruptly on the buſineſs he came about. I cut him ſhort, by aſking, "What was the purport of the

Papers

Papers he held in his hand? and whether they would not explain what he was going to ſay?"—"Moſt certainly, he ſaid; they are the ſeveral depoſitions of the Witneſſes concerning the diſcovery of your Ladyſhip's incontinence."—"Pray, Sir, do they relate to facts?" I aſked.—"Why, Madam, not abſolutely to facts, to be ſure; but we hope we ſhall be able to prove what we want." I ſaw the muſcles of *Fanny*'s throat working; ſhe ſeemed all agitation; I feared, leſt ſhe might expreſs herſelf ſeverely, therefore I took her hand in mine, and kiſſing it, "Compoſe yourſelf, my Love; ſay not one word on this buſineſs." She returned the preſſure, and lifting up her eyes, heaved a ſigh, but opened not her lips.

"What is that Parchment you hold, Sir?"—"This, Madam, contains Articles which your Ladyſhip is to ſign."—"Articles, Sir! of what nature?"—"Articles to be ſeparately obſerved by Lord *Cleveland* and your Ladyſhip, until this affair is ſettled by Parliament; I muſt deſire your Ladyſhip to peruſe it." He put it into my hand; I ſaw written, in large characters, "Articles of Separation between *William*, "Earl of *Cleveland*, and *Emma* his Wife, "charged with Incontinence; to be by "them obſerved, until the ſaid *William*,

"Earl

" Earl of *Cleveland*, can obtain a Divorce " from the ſaid *Emma*, according to the Act " in ſuch caſes provided."

As poor *Gloceſter* ſays, had each Letter been a Sun I could not have read a word further; tears dimmed my eyes. " Take it, my *Fanny*, (ſaid I, with a broken voice,) let me receive my condemnation from your lips." The dear Girl unwillingly obeyed me; ſhe began, but had not proceeded half through the firſt article before her voice failed her; it was choaked with ſobs and ſighs. " I cannot go on," (ſaid ſhe.) " Do not, then, attempt it, my Love. I ſhall be able to gueſs the purport by the treatment which will follow. I only beg to be informed briefly by you, Sir, whether there is any article where guilt is implied on my ſide; as, if there is, I will not ſign it; I know my own rectitude, and I will not ſet my name to a falſe accuſation againſt myſelf." He aſſured me there was not. I then took the pen he brought and ſigned my name. He wanted to aſk me ſeveral queſtions; but I ſtopped him, by telling him, " his queſtions were unbecoming, and I ſhould not anſwer them, I deſired him to leave the room, as I had complied with the orders of my Lord in ſigning the articles."

The

The day after this my Mother's Letter was brought me; I ſhall encloſe it for you; it will be an incitement to you, to let her know all that relates to her unfortunate Daughter. Mr. *Brereton* aſſures me, that he will ſave *Fanny* from my Father's reſentment. I wonder my Jailereſs would permit me to ſee him. *Fanny* intreated him not to involve himſelf in any diſagreeable *fracas* on her account. I ſaid likewiſe, I ſhould be inexpreſſibly wretched, if I ſhould be the cauſe of more unhappineſs to my family; that I only wiſhed to ſink peaceably to my grave, and to have all theſe diſtreſſes forgotten. "You are a good creature, (ſaid Mr. *Brereton*,) and, for your ſake, I am glad you have the conſciouſneſs of innocence to ſupport you; but for the wretch, your Huſband, I wiſh, from my ſoul, he was ten times the cuckold he fancies himſelf." I cannot repeat what he ſaid of the vile Mrs. *Hotham*; you may gueſs, he is not very delicate in the choice of his expreſſions, but I am ſure he is my friend. He blamed me for ſigning thoſe articles; ſays they have no right to confine me, and conſtrain me to ſet my hand to what they ſhould pleaſe to draw up.—I returned to this, that I was fully reſolved they ſhould have nothing to alledge againſt me; that I would make no oppoſition to the will of my Lord;

Lord; that I had ſtrictly adhered to my duty, except in that of giving him my heart, which he well knew was pre-engaged, and which he thought too trifling an object ever to attempt to attain. I had nothing to accuſe myſelf of relative to my conduct. I lamented more than any thing not being allowed pen and ink. Mr. *Brereton* ſwore I ſhould have the allowance of pen, or he would ſtate the caſe to the Lord Chancellor. He left me to go to my Lord; and returned with a quire of paper, and my own ſtandiſh.

The firſt uſe I made of my pen was to write a Letter of thanks to my Lord, for this indulgence, which Letter I deſired my Brother *Brereton* to deliver to him. It was couched pretty much in theſe terms:— I firſt thanked him for reſtoring my pen and ink; and then begged he would not draw on my Siſter the reſentment of her family; I could ſupport my own misfortunes with a degree of fortitude; and concluded by ſaying, I aſked no mercy, ſince I was ſure they who would deny me juſtice, would never be inclined to grant me the other. I then in as pathetic a manner as I could find words to expreſs, recommended my poor Child to his tendereſt feelings as a Parent. I beſought him, on my knees, to cheriſh the poor little Infant, which I hoped

hoped he would not deprive me the ſociety of. In ſhort, I hardly know what I ſaid on this head; my expreſſions, however, came from my heart; a heart overwhelmed with anguiſh and anxiety. Captain *Brereton* wept plentifully over the lines I penned. "This muſt ſoften him, unleſs he has a more than ſavage heart, (cried he,) he cannot withſtand this moving eloquence." But I doubt he has a ſavage heart, my *Louiſa!* He ſeemed very little moved at reading my Letter; he indeed promiſed never to accuſe *Fanny* to my Parents, but he is cruel to me in a very ſenſible inſtance; I am not allowed the company of my little *Harriet*; the dear Angel only comes in once a day, and then ſtays with me no longer than half an hour, and I am in conſtant apprehenſion that this privilege will ſoon be denied me. Ah! have I not reaſon to complain? But what avail complaints? I muſt bear the ills that are hourly heaped upon me. Let me have your prayers, my deareſt *Louiſa!*

Yours, while I have ſenſe or life,

EMMA CLEVELAND.

LET-

LETTER LX.

To Lady LOUISA STRETTON.

ALAS! my Dear, they are ſtriving, by every method, to drive me to ſome act of deſperation; but I truſt in Heaven they will not ſucceed. No Servant waits on me but *Wilſon* — She is one of the chief Agents in this black affair. How ſenſibly was I ſhocked this morning, when a Letter was put into my hand by *Wilſon*; I eagerly tore it open, hoping it came from you. Judge of the ſurprize and indignation which ſeized me, when I found it was ſigned "*Oſwald.*" Yes, my dear *Louiſa*, ſo fallen is your poor Friend, that the wretch *Oſwald* offers her his protection. I feel how very much I am ſunk in the eyes of the world. I thought I could bear its calumnies, but I cannot ſupport its inſults.—In a rage I tore the Letter piece-meal, and ſtamped it under my feet. I have wrote ſeveral times to my Lord, but either my Letters never reach him, or he has totally hardened his heart againſt me. Would to Heaven I was laid low in my grave. They want me dead. I am kept in ignorance of every thing about me. I think I cannot long undergo theſe ſeverities. Mr. *Brere-*

ton promiſed to call on me, either he has forſaken your wretched Friend, or they won't admit him. That confident Creature, *Wilſon*, ſays, ſhe has no orders to detain my Letters — For a trial I wiſh, my Love, you would write a few lines immediately on the receipt of this. I will not fail to acknowledge your favour the inſtant it comes to hand; that will convince me my ſituation is not ſo calamitous as I now think it is.

Heaven knows to what I am reſerved, but ſome ſcheme is on foot, though I am unable to inform you what it is. *Wilſon* has been packing up my cloaths — Perhaps they mean to decoy me away — Good God! I have heard of people being ſo atrociouſly wicked as to put their relations into mad-houſes. Oh! *Louiſa*, I am already half diſtracted. Such a proceeding would rob me of the few ſcattered ſenſes which remain. I aſked for my child at the appointed hour—I was told ſhe was ſleeping—I am ſure it was a falſhood. I have not yet ſeen her. Lord help me! What is it they would have me do?—I am more diſtreſſed than ever.

It is certainly intended I ſhould quit this place, but I am fixed in my reſolution never to leave the houſe until I have it under

under my Lord's hand, whither I am to be carried. I will encloſe the direction to you, and if on enquiry I am not found there, let me entreat you to endeavour to gain intelligence where I am confined; for of this be aſſured, unleſs I am ſtrictly confined, I will write to you. I have the moſt dreadful forebodings — Perhaps they mean to deſtroy me — I know not their intentions, but my own fears and anxiety rend my ſoul in pieces.

I have aſked *Wilſon* what theſe preparations are for? She ſaid, "She was told I was to be removed into the country."— "What country, (I haſtily demanded,) to *Cleveland?*"—"No, (ſhe anſwered,) that was thought to be too near town." So an hundred and twenty miles is too near town— they might have added, it was too near *Stretton-houſe* with more propriety, which I do ſuppoſe is the reaſon that is not to be my priſon; for who is there in town that can make it being within a hundred and twenty miles a dangerous ſituation? "If not to *Cleveland*, where then?" — "Indeed ſhe could not tell." — "Then you may tell your Employers, that I will never leave this houſe till I am informed where I am to be conveyed. I have reaſon to apprehend dangerous conſpiracies againſt my

life, or perhaps injuries ſtill worſe; but I will aſſert my freedom, and make ye all tremble."

My reſolute ſpirit has afforded me ſome little advantage. I have this moment received this *Billet* from Lord *Cleveland*—I will preſerve the curious original.

"Lady *Cleveland* need not ſuſpect any ſiniſter behaviour will be uſed againſt her; but it is the requeſt of her injured Huſband, and made one of the Articles ſhe ſigned, that ſhe would reſide in the country, till the laws of the land give him the liberty of making a more eligible choice than he unfortunately has done in her. An exception was made in the beforementioned Articles againſt any of her Lord's ſeats—She will be properly taken care of by a relation of Lord *Cleveland*'s, who lives in *South Wales*, whither ſhe is deſired to prepare herſelf to go to-morrow morning. Her future conduct in life muſt be the guide of her Huſband's action towards her. She has nothing to fear, ſince juſtice alone ſways the breaſt of

CLEVELAND."

I now remember there was ſomething mentioned about *Wales* in the encloſed Letter my Mother ſent me, but the extreme

treme agitation I was under prevented my attending to it. I think I have heard my Lord mention this Relation, though he ſeldom talked of family affairs. He once ſaid he had a queer old Aunt, who lived in a deſolate caſtle, and whom diſappointments and illneſs had ſoured into a Miſanthrope. This is perhaps the Relation who is to take care of me. Well, ſurely if I bear all this, my moſt cruel enemies muſt allow I have one virtue, namely, Patience.

Heaven alone knows, my deareſt *Louiſa*, whether we ſhall ever meet again. The human heart will ſuſtain a great deal; infinitely more than I could have formed an idea of. If I ſhould outlive my ſufferings, we may yet embrace on this ſide eternity: if I ſhould fall a martyr to them, let me live in your remembrance—And, Oh! let me intreat you to pay back to my Child ſome part of the affection her unhappy Mother feels for you. My Lord has aſſured me, by *Wilſon*, that he will be tender of my Child, and that I ſhall ſoon ſee it. Adieu! my dear, ever dear *Louiſa*, Heaven preſerve you and yours; may you meet every felicity in your union with Lord *Stretton!* may all your paths be ſtrewed with flowers that never grew in mine! It would be cruel not to mention one more;

you know who I mean; recommend me to him; he has been a great ſufferer for my ſake: Heaven preſerve him!

I am yours for ever!

EMMA CLEVELAND.

LETTER LXI.

To Lady LOUISA STRETTON.

I Am at this moment writing from the moſt gloomy and deſolated place that Deſpair can paint, or that Envy could place a perſecuted being in. I look on myſelf as buried alive, as I know not when I ſhall emerge from this dreary ſolitude; I have already been here a week. My journey deſerves not a deſcription; it was ſuch as you may naturally figure to yourſelf, when undertaken by one almoſt become indifferent as to what might happen to her, and accompanied by a baſe inſtrument of her misfortunes. Ah! good God! yet when I thought of my Child, I became almoſt frantic. Although I had ſaid I would quit the houſe, yet the pangs I felt on leaving her behind, were infinitely more than my philoſophy, my reaſon, or ſtrength of body could bear; I fainted ſeveral times. At length

length my Lord ſent me a ſolemn aſſurance that my Child ſhould be taken to my Mother; that he had written to her to beg her to receive it; and that it ſhould ſometimes be my viſitor. This aſſurance calmed me; I am ſure my dear honoured Mother will be kind to my *Harriet*.

As the Spring advances, perhaps this place may wear a leſs dreary aſpect. All around at preſent is deſolation in its moſt frightful form. Figure to yourſelf an old ruinated caſtle, over which time has triumphed, moated all around, with a horrid draw-bridge; I hear no ſounds but the ſcreaming of rooks, and whiſtling of the winds; all chearful ſounds are wholly baniſhed. The inſide of this tremendous caſtle preſents miſery in another point of view; the furniture old and crazy; the hangings once rich, torn and defaced. The Miſtreſs of the manſion, Lady *Elizabeth Cleveland*, a repreſentation almoſt of *Otway*'s *Witch*, though rather more decently apparelled. Harſh and ſevere in her manner, unaccuſtomed to ſociety, and perhaps prejudiced againſt me. You will readily believe my reception was not very flattering to a perſon in my predicament. The looks of the old Lady were not very likely to conciliate one's eſteem, or even veneration, at firſt; ſentiments, which age generally excites in my boſom; but

then the auſterity which accompanies her looks, and the frigid tone of voice, rather filled me with terror than complacency; beſides, I looked on her as my *Governante*, and one that would make me feel all the ſeverity of bondage. This outward proſpect, joined to the tumult within, rendered my ſtate ſtill more deplorable; I paſſed whole days in tears, without taſting the leaſt food. My diſtreſs ſeemed a little to relax the ſeverity of Lady *Elizabeth*'s features. She yeſterday took my hand, "You do wrong, (ſaid ſhe,) not to endeavour to preſerve your life; you muſt excuſe me, but there ſeems more of obſtinacy than penitence in your lamentations." I found, as I thought, the good Lady had been prejudiced againſt me. What barbarity! They even would not give me a chance of being pitied in my misfortunes; they grudge me the ſmalleſt comforts. I told her, "ſhe knew not my ſufferings, or ſhe would think thoſe who had inflicted the puniſhment ſtood more in need of penitence than me; that ſhe had been much deceived, as ſhe would allow, was ſhe to hear the whole of my unhappy ſtory." She begged to be informed of thoſe parts I choſe to communicate; my confidence has won the old Lady's heart. "I muſt weep, my Child, I muſt weep for your great afflictions; I have not wept theſe forty years for

for my own, but your diſtreſs brings tears again into my eyes. I thought never to have wept again. I judged the whole world unworthy my concern, but you bring me back again to it, and I find one individual worthy of my regard; come, thou Child of Sorrow, to my boſom; to a boſom which has been racked with anguiſh too; yet you have a conſolation I never experienced; you have found your friends faithful; you only ſuffered from your enemies; while my breaſt has been pierced through and through by the hands of thoſe on whom I relied for comfort and ſupport; thoſe, on whoſe boſom I would have wept, were the cauſe of my tears; thoſe who ſhould have dried my tears, drew them from me; the hands which ſhould have ſupported me, bent me down; and thoſe who ſhould have formed my happineſs, meditated and contrived my ruin." The good old Lady ſeemed too much affected to proceed, and yet was unwilling to diſcover her emotions. Her former griefs ſeemed renewed; ſhe walked haſtily backwards and forwards in the room, without taking the leaſt notice of me. I would not diſturb her *reverie*, therefore ſtole out of the room, feeling a reſpect for her ſorrows. I ſaw her Ladyſhip no more that day. This morning I heard her traverſing the gallery; I went thither to pay

her the proper compliments; I found her with a viſible melancholy ſeated on her viſage; I made no obſervation, but talked on indifferent ſubjects. She began the topic herſelf, by ſaying, "The converſation, my Dear, which I held with you yeſterday, rendered my night a ſleepleſs one. I thought I had out-lived all my ſenſibility, that I had got the better of my feelings; becauſe the natural calamities of life no longer afflicted me, I flattered myſelf I was proof againſt the repreſentations of diſtreſs; but I find my faculties only have lain dormant through a long ſeries of years, and are not deſtroyed; your ſtory yeſterday awakened all the ſofter feelings of my ſoul, and again made me ſenſible, that the misfortunes of humanity will cauſe a ſympathy in the human breaſt. I will not, however, place the whole of my ſleepleſs night to your account. What I ſaid yeſterday, relative to myſelf, will convince you, that your recital awakened likewiſe the remembrance of my former ſufferings. I was younger than you are when I firſt became an inhabitant of this Caſtle: I was then confined here. Till the death of my Father I led the life of a priſoner. For ſeveral years I was not permitted to croſs the bridge. So long a ſecluſion from the world made me indifferent as to its concerns.

concerns. Cuſtom reconciled me to my priſon, nay, even made it pleaſing to me; and time, which blunted the poignancy of my grief, endeared the place to me. I would not now quit it on any ſcore, to enter again into a world full of treachery and deceit." I told her, "if it would not affect her too much, I ſhould wiſh to be made acquainted with the cauſe of her rigorous treatment." I was the more deſirous, as there ſeemed ſome degree of ſimilarity in our lives. It was remarkable, that two of the ſame family ſhould be made priſoners, through the arbitrary proceedings of the ſame family, at an early age, and equally without hope of a releaſe from confinement.—"As to my part, (ſaid ſhe,) I never wiſh to quit this retirement; it is become habitual to me. Five and forty years ſecluſion from the world has rendered me an intire ſtranger to its ways; but I hope you will ſoon return to meet its joys." I returned her my thanks, but ſaid, "I had very little probability of again entering on the ſtage of life, as it was certainly my Lord's intent to keep me here till he could obtain a Divorce, which, unleſs the Witneſſes were guilty of the blackeſt perjury, could never take place." She tenderly and fervently prayed to Heaven that my innocence might be manifeſted to all the world.

You may now, my Dear, indulge me with your kind Letters. I am anxious to be informed how my amiable *Fanny* was received at home; whether my dear Child is under the protection of my good Mother: In ſhort, every thing. Your Letters may afford ſome ſmall ſhare of felicity to

Your faithful

EMMA CLEVELAND.

LETTER LXII.

To Lady CLEVELAND.

I Cannot poſtpone writing a moment longer, now I know my beloved *Emma* is at liberty to hear from her faithful Friend. Alas! my Dear, how infinite have been your misfortunes and trials! How has my heart bled, and my eyes flowed over your melancholy recitals! You judged right; I was made acquainted with the mournful particulars when your firſt Letter reached me. Oh! that infernal *Hotham*; can ſhe by no means be brought to condign puniſhment? Oh! that I were Judge and Executioner in one. But I am indulging myſelf in unavailing expletives, when I might afford you better conſolation. Your ſweet little Girl is quite well, and looks like an

Angel,

Angel. I have been to *Woodville-Hall*. Do you not wonder to hear I have paid a viſit there? Lord *Stretton* adviſed me to take that ſtep, thinking it would be for your advantage, as well as contributing to your ſatisfaction. I will not expatiate on the behaviour of your Mother: I have reſtored a conſiderable ſhare of comfort to her heart. She is confirmed in her opinion of your innocence—Your Father is convinced that you have been injuriouſly treated; but what I think will give you pleaſure, your ſweet *Fanny* is my gueſt. There is news for you. Dear, amiable Girl, how much I love her. Indeed, it is impoſſible I ſhould not, prepared as I have been by the character you have drawn.

Lord *Cleveland* is a dupe to this infamous Woman. Oh! that your virtue and innocence may be ſpeedily manifeſted. You muſt, I am ſure, you will ſoon be cleared. Theſe Wretches always do ſomething to blow themſelves up. What a ſupport is integrity of heart!—How has that conſciouſneſs borne you up through all your difficulties! Lord *Stretton* and Sir *Charles Beville* never ceaſe talking of you. I had ever a bad opinion of *Hotham*. Do you know the Wretch has given it out, that as ſoon as a divorce takes place, ſhe is to be Lady *Cleveland*. Is he not mad? He muſt

muſt know her to be an infamous Woman— I told you long ſince I had heard her character was rather dubious while her Huſband lived: I find, by making her our ſubject, that her name is not unknown to Sir *Charles Beville* — He ſays, ſhe was ſuſpected of having an intrigue with a Mr. *Cleveland*, a Couſin of your Lord's; ſo the Wretch has a partiality for the Family. This Mr. *Cleveland* is the next heir to the title and eſtate — Who knows, he may be one of the engineers in this infernal plot; I hinted as much to Sir *Charles*; he thinks it not at all unlikely, and is determined to find him out, and endeavour to develope the truth of this affair. He ſays, *Cleveland*'s fortune is a very deſperate one, and he has not the higheſt opinion of his honour. May not this lead to ſomething in our favour? Hope ſhould never forſake the Virtuous and Innocent.

Your amiable fellow Sufferer does not want a Comforter; my good Lord *Stretton* affords him all he can beſtow. He has ſpent ſome days with him. His greateſt grief is the thoughts of what your delicacy muſt endure from the cenſures of an ignorant world. But this is a ſubject I will not enlarge upon; indeed, it is a theme with which I never could truſt myſelf; I never poſſeſſed your prudence and philoſophy.

Had

Had I been in your ſituation, I hope, and dare believe, I ſhould have been virtuous, but I know I ſhould have been very, very imprudent; our trials, however, are proportioned to our ſtrength. — "The Lord tempers the wind to the ſhorn lamb."

I gueſs you will be ſurprized at my having your *Fanny* for a Viſitor; but your Father had compaſſion on the poor Girl; ſhe was really very much indiſpoſed. Her affection for you had much affected her mind; we all interceded for change of air and objects, and were ſo fortunate as to prevail. And I do not know if her preſence here will not excite a little diſturbance to ſome folks. I have a kind of *preſentiment* that *Beville* will ſoon be induced to forget his make-believe Wife, and I ſhould hope that his bright black eyes and white teeth will wipe from her remembrance the inſolent, worthleſs *Oſwald*. But, however, theſe are ſurmiſes merely of my own, not that I ſhould be ſorry if ſuch an affair ſhould hereafter come on the *tapis*; for, notwithſtanding his juvenile flights, *Beville* is a very amiable young Man, and one ſo thoroughly beloved by Lord *Stretton* and his other ſelf, that that circumſtance beſpeaks him worthy of any Woman's love.

You

You have raiſed my curioſity with your account of the Lady of the Caſtle, where you are paſſing your ſpring months. I have a confuſed notion of hearing ſomewhat about her — I have an idea that ſhe committed ſome trifling *faux-pas* in the days of her youth, and ſo was ſent to do penance on the Mountains of *Wales*; but I may have been wrong informed. If ever ſhe ſhould make you her *Confidante*, let me be a partaker of her hiſtory.

Your Siſter writes by this poſt to you. Let me hear from you by every opportunity; conſider now it is the only intercourſe. Heaven ſend we may ſoon meet.

Adieu! Yours for ever,

LOUISA STRETTON.

LETTER LXIII.

To Mrs. HOTHAM.

AGAIN I write, though I may again incur your diſpleaſure; but how is it poſſible I ſhould be ſilent while I am tortured on the rack of doubt and fear? What am I to think of the inconſiſtency of your conduct? Am I to give no credit to the reports which are daily circulating? My ears are hourly curſed with hearing you

you are to be Lady *Cleveland.* What have I have been doing? Have I been helping you to deſtroy the happineſs of an amiable Woman, to reap no advantage myſelf? The more I ſtudy your character, the more I am perplexed. Oh! *Eliza*, what am I to think! — You know I ſtill love you to diſtraction; that to gain, and keep you mine, I have acted the part of a villain — Where is the reward you have ſo often promiſed me? Why do you ſtill continue abſent from me, and, what is ſtill worſe, why are you in the houſe with my rival? Such he certainly is; I can but too plainly gather that fatal truth from your Letters. You ſaid it was neceſſary to make the world believe Lord *Cleveland* loved you, in order to give his Wife a ſanction for beſtowing her perſon where ſhe could not with-hold her heart: But where is the neceſſity now of keeping up (I ſtill hope) ſo unneceſſary an appearance? You have done all you wanted to do; they are effectually parted; ſhe is more likely to live than he; ſo, of courſe, he will never marry again: I ſhall, therefore, inherit his eſtate and title, which you, and you alone, ſhall ſhare. Why ſhould you endeavour to drive matters further? We do not want a Divorce, and yet your laſt Letter, which to me appears incomprehenſible, ſeems to harp on nothing elſe than the

the evidence you ſhall be able to procure. Good God! what can you mean? Surely you have not drawn me in to be a villain for nothing? My conſcience ſometimes accuſes me for joining in ſo horrid a treachery, Lady *Cleveland*'s character, though painted by you, is ſo truly amiable. Her ſufferings, even if ſhe was as guilty as you have made her Huſband believe, are much more than adequate to her failings. Oh! *Eliza*, we have much to anſwer for; but, as we have gone ſo far, let us not turn back. Do you unite your fate to mine, and let us bid defiance to the worſt.

This moment I have been told you are certainly to be married ſpeedily to *Cleveland*; that he is labouring, with the utmoſt celerity, to have the Bill of Divorce paſs the Houſe. What is the meaning of this? Eaſe my doubts ſoon, or by Heaven I will come up to town, and aſſert my right over you. Would to Heaven I had made that right a legal one, before I ſuffered you to enter his houſe! I cannot long ſupport the conſtant anxiety I labour under. If you have any regard for me, you will, by acting freely, and without reſerve, contribute all in your power to make him happy, who is ſo much yours, as to be whatever you wiſh him. Adieu!

CLEVELAND.

LET-

LETTER LXIV.

To Lady LOUISA STRETTON.

WHAT felicity, after ſo long and painful an interval, again to be bleſſed with a Letter from my deareſt *Louiſa!* Oh! my Love, what mixed ſenſations did you excite in my care-worn boſom! I cannot give a name to the tumultuous feelings; I was almoſt overpowered by them; filial, maternal, and ſiſterly affection at once conflicting, ſometimes raiſed my drooping heart, at other times overwhelmed me in deep diſtreſs.

The hurry of ſpirits into which the rapidity of events had thrown me, had a little ſubſided when your Letter was brought me: That hurry, though it could not compoſe my *mind*, I believe rendered me leſs ſenſible of the poignancy of the afflictions which oppreſſed it; I had had hardly time to collect my ſcattered ſenſes; a quick ſucceſſion of evil had deſtroyed my reaſoning faculties. Think, my *Louiſa*, what it is to be blackened with the baſeſt calumnies! To be accuſed of defiling the honour of my Huſband! To be ranked among the infamous herd, whom Virtue ſickens but to think of! To be kept a cloſe priſoner, ſecluded from all the enjoyments of life! To be

be torn from my lovely, helpleſs Child! What muſt the heart be compoſed of that can ſupport theſe ills, without a murmur or complaint? Conſcious innocence is ſcarce enough to bear up my enfeebled body. What has my life been, but one continued ſource of misfortune? Oh! would to Heaven I had never gone to *London!* That I had ſtill continued in the peaceful, though not to me happy ſhades, of *Cleveland-Place!* I might then have eſcaped the cenſures of the world. I never wiſhed to figure in the gay ſcenes of life; I courted Solitude; all my hope was, to bear my diſtreſſes without murmuring in a ſilent retreat.

"In life's low vale remote, have pin'd alone,
Then dropp'd into the grave, unpity'd, and unknown."

But I was born to have every wiſh of my heart fruſtrated. You compliment me, my Love, on my Prudence and Philoſophy; I doubt, if you recollect all the paſt paſſages of my life, you will diſallow that I poſſeſs the firſt in any eminent degree; and I am ſure, were you witneſs of the ravages Diſtreſs has made in my perſon and manner, you would not be induced to grant me the latter. Oh! my *Louiſa*, I can tax myſelf with much imprudence concerning this affair. Had I not wrote in a reprehenſible manner, my enemies could never have had an opportunity of

of triumphing over me; Mrs. *Hotham* could never have framed her ſtory ſo as to gain credit. Can I blame the world for conſidering me guilty, when ſo many charges, in appearance well grounded, are lodged againſt me? I am unhappy, but I feel that in part I deſerve ſome mortifications; I have, in ſome meaſure, been the carver of my own misfortunes. As to the purport and contents of the Letters, I both wrote and received, I would ſubmit them to the eye of the public. I am convinced we ſhould both be acquitted of the leaſt defections from Virtue; but our ſituations conſidered, we were wrong. I do moſt heartily implore the forgiveneſs of Heaven for the only ſtep of my life I think faulty; my puniſhment, I hope, will be an atonement.

I am more happy to find my beloved *Fanny* is with you. Tell that dear Girl, I wept over and kiſſed her dear Letter inceſſantly. I cannot write to her by this opportunity; as ſhe is your intimate, writing to you is the ſame thing. She informed me of the intelligence ſhe had received from *Woodville-Hall*, and of the welfare of my Child. Ah! how my heart beats to preſs the ſmiling Cherub in a Mother's arms!

You

You encourage me to hope for a concluſion of my troubles; ah! my Dear, do you not, as uſual, give way to the ſanguineneſs of your diſpoſition?

I am not ſurprized at your intelligence of Mrs. *Hotham* being to be rewarded with the hand of Lord *Cleveland*; I did ſuppoſe that was the primary motive of her conduct; yet I think that event never can take place, unleſs they give me a compoſing draught to cure all my afflictions.

The compaſſion, and even eſteem and friendſhip, which my ſufferings have excited in the breaſt of Lady *Elizabeth*, have brought us on a more agreeable footing. I have examined the picture which ſhe tells me was drawn for her in early life. My eyes expreſſed my aſtoniſhment, when I perceived in it a ſtrong reſemblance of your figure. "Yes, (ſaid ſhe,) ſuch I was when I firſt became an inmate of this dreary place." There is not the leaſt veſtige remaining. I cannot, with the minuteſt ſcrutiny, trace the ſmalleſt reſemblance. It is true, the bloom of Youth, and the furrows of Age, ſeldom accord; yet, in general, there is ſome ſtroke, ſome outline, to aſſiſt the memory, but here is not the leaſt. Such depredations have misfortunes, ill health, and a total neglect, concurred to make in her exterior. To be ſure, I rather went too far, when

when I drew a compariſon between her and *Otway*'s Witch. The prejudices ſhe had conceived of me, ſerved to make her more formidable in her appearance, but uſe has reconciled me more to her figure, and, I doubt not, a farther knowledge of her will endear her to my heart.

She has taſted the bitter Cup of Affliction in a great degree. The recital of her *Story* has for ſome moments obliterated my *own* from my memory, or rather, I wept for both in one. I will encloſe her Hiſtory for your peruſal; return it to me when you have read it, as I believe the good Lady will wiſh to have it again in her poſſeſſion.

Adieu! my ever-dear *Louiſa!* remember I love you always.

EMMA CLEVELAND.

The HISTORY *of Lady* ELIZABETH CLEVELAND.

I AM going, my Dear, to make you a melancholy detail, which will convince you, that to be unfortunate is not ſingular; and although you are at this moment bewailing your own unhappy deſtiny, there is one at leaſt as wretched as yourſelf.—A ſmall conſolation this to a benevolent mind. But without further preface, I will make you acquainted with the moſt calamitous parts of my life, of thoſe incidents, which occaſioned me,

me, early in life, to be kept a close prisoner here.

From the rigorous treatment I have received, you will be able to judge, that my Parents were very severe; they were both so in a very eminent degree. It was my ill-fortune, as it proved, to attract the notice of a young Baronet in our neighbourhood in the country. His person was strikingly handsome, his address insinuating; I was young and tender-hearted; no wonder, then, his seducing manners should soften and gain my affections. My Father and Mother, to do them justice, behaved, on their first acquaintance with him, with the utmost politeness; and if he afterwards found any abatement in their civilities, he must place it to his own account. He was careless of his conduct after he had entirely subdued my affections—He did not pay them the deference they required. I was pained to death at his behaviour. I used to remonstrate to him, that people of their rank and age merited more attention, and that it was his interest to pay it to them. His pride was piqued at their arrogance, as he stiled it.—He thought an ancient Baronet better than an upstart Earl. These sentiments he was weak enough to broach in all companies. No one could wonder that my Father should refuse me to him. My heart

died

died within me when I found how abſolutely my family were againſt the match taking place. I flattered myſelf I ſhould be able to work a reformation in him. His behaviour to me was tender to the laſt degree. He uſed to ſay, "My dear *Elizabeth*, your gentle manners can ſoften me to any thing; but the boiſterous tempers of your family only ſerve as oil to make me blaze." I then would entreat him to behave with more moderation for my ſake; he would lay all the blame on them; and, as the ſtories I heard to his prejudice were told me by them, I uſed ſometimes to think they might exaggerate.

While things were in this ſtate, a Gentleman of great fortune, but diſagreeable in his perſon, made my Father an offer on my account. He, deſirous of ſeeing me ſettled out of the reach of Sir *Thomas Freeland*, readily cloſed with the meaſures of this man. Sir *Thomas*, on hearing this affair, became outrageous—He ſtormed like a madman, and, coming to our houſe, abuſed my Father in the groſſeſt terms. I almoſt wept myſelf blind when I heard of the extravagance of his behaviour. I got a young Lady, whom I loved very much, to go to him, and tell him, he had for ever forfeited my good opinion. He threw himſelf on his knees before her, and begged ſhe would intercede with

me in his behalf; that his fears for me had made him raving mad, and he could not anſwer for the conſequences; that however he would for the future bear every thing my family might inflict on him, if I would be induced to forgive him. I believe you will not wonder, though you may blame me, for ſoon affording him pardon for what the exceſs of his paſſion excited; beſides, I was ſtrongly urged by my Friend; ſhe uſed to bring me Letters, and contrive fifty methods for our meeting, unknown to any one.

You who know what it is to have had your inclination forced, will judge of my feelings, when this other, Mr. *Bently*, was propoſed to me.—I begged my Father not to lay ſo cruel a tax on my duty; that I would never marry without his full conſent; but that it would be worſe than death to conſtrain me to give my hand to Mr. *Bently*, who was my averſion; in ſhort, I ſuppoſe I uſed every argument, which a Girl in my ſituation could, and to little purpoſe. My Father urged the impoſſibility of ſecuring me from Sir *Thomas*—I readily promiſed to reſign him for ever—to bind myſelf by the ſtrongeſt ties never to marry. This, I believe, might have had weight with my Father, but that very evening news was received of there being a duel fought between Sir *Thomas Freeland* and Mr.

Mr. *Bently*. This proceeding exaſperated my Family ſtill more againſt one, who ſeemed ſtudious to do every thing in his power to create freſh diſturbances. This event was, however, ſoftened to me by my before-mentioned Friend. She ſaid, Sir *Thomas* had been told, I had actually given my conſent to marry Mr. *Bently*, and that deſpair had urged him to take theſe violent meaſures. My Father now became every day more reſolute to bring about an union between his favourite and me; but, abſtracted from the diſagreeableneſs of his perſon, there ſeemed not the leaſt paſſion on his ſide. He never uſed any means to gain my heart. Indeed, before my Parents, he would ſometimes behave a little particular, but as ſoon as they left the room, he would quit his ſeat, if it happened to be near me, and go to the window, and amuſe himſelf with looking in the garden, or turning over ſome books. If I ſpoke to him, he would generally not anſwer, or elſe contradict whatever I ſaid. Sometimes he would take notice of my dreſs, or manner, only to find fault with them. I uſed to tell him, he did not take the method to gain my heart. His anſwer would be, "What, I ſuppoſe your Ladyſhip wants me to play with you, and kiſs you; well, come, if you are for a romping party, have at you." He then

would attempt to be familiar. I could not ſupport ſuch inſolence, therefore our interviews commonly ended in my retiring in tears to my own apartment. This, joined to the conſtant revilings againſt a man I could not ceaſe to love, made my life very wretched. As I ſaid before, I promiſed to relinquiſh *Freeland*, if my Father would releaſe me from the perſecutions of the other; but he was ſo well convinced that there only wanted an opportunity to go off with Sir *Thomas*, that all I could ſay went for nothing. Wherever he went, he was repeatedly told, that Sir *Thomas* ſet him and his authority at defiance, and that he ſcrupled not to ſwear he would have me, in deſpite of all my Friends. This boldneſs only ſerved to irritate my Father more, both againſt him and me; it is impoſſible to recount to you all the hardſhips I ſuffered on his account; I was treated with the greateſt inhumanity by my Family, and the conduct of *Bently* was as abſurd as theirs was cruel. To induce me to give my conſent to this hated Match, I was ſhut up in my own room, and kept without food till I was almoſt ſtarved; my cloaths were taken from me, and I was conſtrained to walk about bare-foot, leſt I ſhould run away, though, confined as I was, there were no human means of getting out of the houſe, unleſs I had crept up the chimney,

for

for the windows were barred and nailed down. *Freeland* ſtill continued his menaces loudly, and was continually doing ſomething or other to affront and annoy the Family, inſomuch that they were obliged to keep within doors, and were almoſt as much priſoners as myſelf. This outrageous behaviour of this violent man, as it was imputed to me, ſo it was revenged upon me. I never ſaw any of my Family but to bear the moſt cruel reproaches, and hardeſt uſage.

Had Mr. *Bently* been any thing leſs diſagreeable to me, I believe I ſhould have given him my hand, rather than have longer ſupported the cruel treatment I daily was forced to endure, but I could not think of him without the greateſt horror, which did not ſo much ariſe from the plainneſs of his perſon, as his brutal manner, and ſavage behaviour to me. I have been kept whole days and nights without food, or ſeeing the light. The hard and barbarous uſage of my Family turned my heart againſt them, and I was fully reſolved to die, rather than conſent to their deſires.

While I was in this ſituation, one evening, ruminating on my hard deſtiny, ſomething fell down the chimney; the noiſe rouſed me from my *reverie*, and I found it to be a ſtone, wrapped up in a ſheet of paper. I opened it, and, to my great joy, perceived it

to be a Letter from *Freeland.* Ah! how laviſh was he of his tender profeſſions! How full of love did every ſentence appear! Think what a treaſure ſuch lively aſſurances of his unabating paſſion was to me in my preſent exigency! He told me he would furniſh me with implements for writing, and begged I would let him know the true ſtate of my heart, for if it inclined to make him happy, he would loſe no time in effecting my eſcape, as he was morally certain, that, in a few days, I ſhould be dragged to the Altar, where, let my repugnance be ever ſo great, I ſhould unavoidably become the Wife of *Bently.* He then proceeded to paint that wretch in the moſt odious colours; he repreſented that my life would be one continued ſeries of miſery, as he was of ſo jealous a diſpoſition; in ſhort, he drew ſuch a picture of my wretchedneſs, as threw me into ſo violent a fit of trembling, I thought I had had an ague, from which I turned exceedingly ſick at my ſtomach, and continued ſo bad the whole night as to think I ſhould die.

The next morning I was much better; to which my finding a packet hanging to a ſtring down the chimney contributed not a little. I returned ſuch an anſwer to my Lover as you would ſuppoſe on the occaſion; expreſſed my doubts, and at the ſame time urged my wiſhes of enlargement. Another

other Letter informed me, I muſt ſeem to conſent to the will of my Father, by which means I might be permitted to leave that chamber for another, from whence there was a greater probability of eſcaping. I obſerved his advice, and every thing ſucceeded accordingly. I was allowed to ſleep in a room where the windows had no more than ordinary faſtenings. I continued there but one night, for the next, by help of a ladder, I got out of the window. At the bottom I met *Freeland*; he joyfully accompanied me over ſome fields, running all the way, till we came to the high road, where a chariot and ſix was waiting for us. I knew not where we were going, but I know I felt as happy as any mortal could do. I never reflected on thoſe I left behind, nor the riſk I ran by thus throwing myſelf into the power of a man, who might uſe that power to my diſadvantage. Alas! I knew not the perfidy of the world; I was totally a ſtranger to the depravity of its ways.—Thus I gave myſelf up to the ſeducer, without the leaſt ſuſpicion. Perhaps I was very blameable, and might merit my future puniſhment; but when thoſe who caſt cenſures ſo freely on my conduct reflect on what I had already ſuffered from the cruelty of my Parents, could they ſuppoſe a young Girl, a ſtranger to the wickedneſs of the

world, ſhould heſitate between the certain ruin which opened before her, and the proſpect of happineſs which ſhe had a right to flatter herſelf with, in an union with a man who had ſo often ſworn he lived but for her: Such cool dull reaſoners may fancy what they pleaſe, but they can know nothing of Love. It had been far happier for me had the ſame apathy exiſted in my boſom; but I own I had paſſions of a tender nature; and I believe any young woman, with the ſame warmth and inexperience, might have acted as I did, and been deceived by the ſpecious pretences of an artful and deſigning man. We are not ſuſpicious by nature; it is a long and painful knowledge of the fallacy of the world makes us ſo. No child could be more ignorant of its ways than myſelf. I premiſe thus much in my own juſtification, for could I have had the leaſt idea of the dangers I was hurrying into, and which, with ſuch difficulty, I avoided, I certainly would have run any hazard at home before I would have expoſed myſelf to them.

But to return. We travelled all that day, making ſhort baits, and at night arrived at an Inn, though on what road I was ignorant. I had not the leaſt reaſon to be diſpleaſed with my Companion, except when he ſpoke of my Family, then I could ſcarcely keep

keep him within bounds: He ſwore, notwithſtanding their title, they were a ſet of deſpicable wretches, and no circumſtance in life would give him ſo much pleaſure as mortifying them in the moſt ſenſible manner.

The next day, while we were proſecuting our journey, he ſaid the ſame things. I then told him, "I thought he did not pay me a compliment in ſpeaking with ſuch ſeverity of my family; that I hoped he would conſider it would more behove him to endeavour by an union, to conciliate their favour, than to ſeek to widen the breach by open inſult." — He replied, "My deareſt Angel, is it not on account of the ill uſage you have ſuffered that I am thus inveterate againſt them? Can I forgive them that? No, if I do may I live a Wretch and die a Beggar. It is my love for you that gives riſe to my invectives; they are wholly unworthy the treaſure they poſſeſſed in you." Theſe ſpeeches ſilenced, though they did not ſatisfy me; I thought he ought to be contented with the mortification he had already given them by ſtealing me away, and fruſtrating their intentions. I own he ſtartled me on ſaying, "He would never forgive their rejection of him: But now, (added he,) my time is come — It will be their turn now to ſolicit." I did

not thoroughly comprehend his meaning; it appeared ſtrange to me he ſhould ever think they would ſolicit to be taken into favour by a Man who had run away with their Daughter. I ſaid, "I hoped he would conſider, that in the eye of the world he had not only been the aggreſſor, but the perſon who had all through wronged them; as all Parents had an undoubted right to reſtrain the hands of their Children." — He aſked me, "If I could be mean enough to ſolicit forgiveneſs from ſuch barbarous Wretches?" — I anſwered, "I thought my ſubſequent conduct in eloping from them had entirely cancelled their former ill uſage; therefore, it would undoubtedly lie with me to make the firſt overtures towards a reconciliation."—He ſwore, if he could ſuppoſe me in earneſt he ſhould deſpiſe my poorneſs of ſpirit.

I was ſhocked, but had gone too far to recede. I was likewiſe very much chagrined on his not ſaying one word about our being to be ſpeedily married. I could not complain of his want of tenderneſs, for though the ſpeeches which I have recited may appear harſh, yet he ſoftened them ſo much that they loſt a great deal of their ſeverity. His love was conſpicuous enough, but I own I ſhould have been better pleaſed to have heard him expreſs an impatience to have

have our union made indiſſoluble, becauſe I was fearful of being overtaken, and likewiſe I knew ſo much of the world as to judge it imprudent to be long in the company of a Man, unleſs we have the ſanction of duty to juſtify our preference.

The ſecond night we reached a houſe, which he ſaid belonged to a Friend of his, who had lent it for his accommodation. We were received by an old Gentlewoman, with great civility. The preparations were genteel and convenient, my apartment neat and pleaſant. On my returning into the parlour again, he roſe, and, taking my hand, preſented me as his Wife, ſaying, "Mrs. *Finch*, give me leave to introduce my Wife to you." I coloured at this declaration; but judge my farther confuſion, when he proceeded: — "She is at preſent indiſpoſed from exceſſive fatigue, therefore I muſt be conſtrained to deſire you to ſhew me a ſeparate apartment to night." I was ſo confounded as to be rendered incapable of uttering a ſyllable, much more of contradicting his bold aſſertion; I had not likewiſe the opportunity, for Mrs. *Finch* immediately left us to ourſelves. When I found myſelf alone with him, "For Heaven's ſake, (cried I,) how could you make ſo falſe a declaration to Mrs. *Finch*? What am I to think of a Man who can

thus avow an untruth?" — "My dear Creature, (ſaid he,) it is better both for you and me to endeavour to make her believe we are married; old Women are apt to be cenſorious."—He ſaid ſo many things on the ſubject, and behaved with ſo much tenderneſs, that I was at laſt prevailed on to join in the deceit. He took a ring from his pocket, and put it on my finger, and then embracing me, called me his dear dear Wife. I ought, no doubt, to have made oppoſition to his deſire of paſſing me off to ſtrangers as his Wife, but remember I ſtill loved him too much not to comply with his wiſhes, and that I really believed a few days would make me ſuch; and add to this, I now found myſelf intirely in his power.

The hurry of my ſpirits prevented my ſleeping much that night. In the morning he received me with rapture; but in a manner as occaſioned in my boſom ſome painful ſenſations, as his expreſſions were, if poſſible, warmer than ever, infinitely more than they ought to be, unleſs ſanctified by marriage. Although Mrs. *Finch* was in the room, he pulled me into his lap, and, kiſſing me, uſed ſome other freedoms, which, knowing my own ſituation, ſhocked me to the greateſt degree. I ſtarted from him, and, with great emotion, declared, I would not ſubmit to ſuch unbounded liberties.

berties. He laughed, and again catching hold of me, My dear little Prude, you ſhould not mind Mrs. *Finch* being in the room, you was not ſo coy juſt now, but I will ſoon repay myſelf for this pretty affected air. I ſuppoſe Mrs. *Finch* thought we ſhould be better pleaſed to have her out of the room; ſhe, therefore, as ſoon as breakfaſt was ended, aroſe and left us.

Shocked to the greateſt degree at his inſinuation of my being leſs reſerved to him, when alone, I burſt into a flood of tears, and threw myſelf in a chair. As ſoon as I could find words, I told him, I thought he took an ungenerous advantage of my ſituation, which I had every moment leſs cauſe to be ſatisfied with; ſurely, if he meant me fair, he would, without further delay, give himſelf a title to my moſt unlimited affection; but, while he thus only pretended we were married, to juſtify his freedoms in the eyes of others, I muſt, and ſhould, for my own ſake, preſerve the greateſt diſtance in my behaviour to him, if I did not even give way to every hard thought of him. He endeavoured to palliate his conduct, but my heart was too much oppreſſed to be ſoon ſoothed to reſt. He ſwore he conſidered me as his Wife, his true and lawful Wife; that I ſhould be ſo both in the eyes of God and Man, as ſoon

as

as ever it could be effected; but that I muſt ſtill conſent to appear ſuch, as he had very particular reaſons for acting as he did.

I had already ſubmitted to authorize his falſe aſſertions, therefore I had now no reſource; I was ſtill obliged to carry on the deceit. Alas! to what a fatal dilemma I had brought myſelf; I was not in a ſituation now to make conditions. I, indeed, remonſtrated, and told him, he ſeemed intirely to have forgot my rank in life; and that my misfortunes, which originated from himſelf, had made me loſe all conſequence with him. This wounded his pride and ſelf-love; he ſaid he deſpiſed the dirty conſideration of an adventitious advantage; that his family was far ſuperior to mine; they had long flouriſhed in affluence before mine was thought of, though it had, in conſequence of ſome paltry ſervices, been dignified with a title; but that Virtue was true Nobility, and he ſhould not think the better of me, for ſuppoſing he ſhould pay any extraordinary deference on that account; that he had received indignities enough from the family, ſuch as it was, but that, if they had refuſed him one of the Kitchen Wenches, and he had been convinced that his running away with her would have planted daggers in their hearts he would never have reſted till he had accom-

compliſhed his deſign. God knows how ſevere were my feelings and remorſe for having thrown myſelf out of the protection of my real friends, though they uſed me cruelly, into the power of ſuch a man.

He then proceeded to tell me I was an Angel, and he ſhould ever adore me, and made me a profuſion of tender ſpeeches. I ſaid, I ſhould be better pleaſed if he was leſs ſevere on my family, as I could not ſupport the idea his violence gave riſe to in my own mind. Indeed I was terrified to death almoſt with his manner, and yet from the freedoms, which I could not prevent his taking with me when Mrs. *Finch* was by, I was not more eaſy in her preſence than when alone.

After ſupper, that night, he endeavoured to put me into good humour, by the gentleneſs of his behaviour; I had never obſerved him ſo tender. There was ſomething pathetic in his manner, I quite forgot the inquietude of the day; he talked of having our wedding ſpeedily performed; in ſhort, I gave myſelf up to the tender ſentiments he laboured to inſpire me with. While we were yet diſcourſing in the moſt pleaſing way to me that I had ever known, the clock ſtruck twelve; I obſerved the lateneſs of the hour, and was going to riſe; he ſtopped me, and, aſſuming the moſt lan-

languiſhing air, vowed he could not part with me. I urged its being ſo late. "Are you not my Wife?" aſked he. "Not yet, (I replied,) but be aſſured I will raiſe no obſtacles againſt my being ſo whenever you pleaſe." — "Then to-morrow," ſaid he. "That is ſhort notice, (I returned,) but I will not diſpute your deſires." He threw his arms round me, and kiſſed me ſeveral times. I ſtrove to diſengage myſelf from his embraces, though I confeſs I felt an uncommon pleaſure in his careſſes. I flattered myſelf he really meant to fulfil his engagements with me. What we wiſh we too eaſily believe. I could not however get away from him; he ſtill continued to preſs me cloſe to his boſom, which ſeemed to beat with the utmoſt tumult; his breath was quick and ſhort, and his eyes looked all on fire. Though wholly unconſcious of his meaning, I found myſelf diſordered and alarmed. I entreated him to let me go: He ſwore he would, if I would but conſent to bleſs him. I aſked what he meant by bleſſing him? He whiſpered in my ear, to admit him to all the fond privileges of an Huſband that night. I ſtarted, and demanded, how he could have the inſolence to make ſuch a propoſal? He endeavoured by his old methods of palliating his offence; and concluded, I had promiſed to be

be really his Wife to-morrow, where then was the harm of anticipating our happineſs a few hours?—To-morrow! I repeated: No, I will not to-morrow, nor any time, become the Wife of a Man, who can form ſo baſe an opinion of me. How, cried I, burſting again into tears, how have I deſerved this treatment from you? You, who ought, who had ſworn to be my protector? But I now ſee through you; your arts and deſigns are laid open to me. Heaven preſerve me, and deliver me out of the hands of a cruel wretch who meditates my deſtruction.

He ſaid all that man could ſay to recompoſe my mind, but the violent agitation I had undergone rendered his taſk more difficult than perhaps he imagined. At laſt, to make me eaſy, he left the room. My fears had now taught me to be ſuſpicious. When I went into my chamber I carefully examined every place, and took care to make my door very ſecure. I went to bed, but the perturbation of my ſpirits would not permit me to cloſe my eyes; I therefore roſe and dreſſed myſelf, ſpending the remaining part of the night in a chair, ruminating on the ſad proſpect before me, even if Sir *Thomas Freeland* ſhould really mean honourably by me. Theſe reflections cauſed rivers of tears to fall from my eyes:

I now,

I now, too late, ſaw the principal incentive of *Freeland*'s paſſion and perſeverance was a deſire of revenge. Ah! how cruel I thought him to wreak his vengeance on the only part of the family who never injured him, but, on the contrary, who would lay down her life for his ſervice.

I knew not how to comport myſelf the next morning, and in what manner I ſhould appear before him; whether I ſhould make a *Confidante* of Mrs. *Finch*, and declare to her I was not married, or whether I ſhould ſtill pay ſome regard to his future promiſes. So much was I unhappily in his power, that I was fearful of exaſperating him, having but too much reaſon to apprehend that he would not be ſcrupulous about the means of revenging himſelf on me. Oh, good God! to what a fatal and deplorable ſtate had my too free and implicit confidence in him brought me into!

While I was thus deliberating in which method to proceed, Mrs. *Finch* came up with Sir *Thomas*'s love, and begged I would come down to breakfaſt. To deliberate now was uſeleſs, I therefore inſtantly followed her down; God knows with what infinite reluctance. I no longer looked on him as my ſupport and ſtay: I now conſidered him in the light of an inſidious enemy, of whom it became me to be continually on the

the watch againſt, leſt, by his artifices, he might betray me to my undoing.

I fancy he did not ſuppoſe I ſhould obey the firſt ſummons, as he was not ready to receive me, being writing. He haſtily put up the paper into a *porte-feuille*, which he locked, and returned the key into his waiſtcoat pocket. I could not deviſe why he ſhould thus employ himſelf; but his whole conduct now appeared to me an inexplicable riddle; or if I could ſolve it, the ſolution made me miſerable.

My heart felt too little eaſe for my countenance to wear the traces of content; I laboured, but in vain, to repreſs the ſtruggling ſigh; the unbidden tear would ſteal in ſilence down my cheek; he could not but make the obſervation; however, while Mrs. *Finch* remained in the room, he took not the leaſt notice of my melancholy looks, or the extreme taciturnity of my tongue. When we were alone, (he ſaid,) "he was extremely ſorry to find ſo much reſentment in my manner for ſo trifling an offence; he moſt humbly beſought me to pardon him, promiſing to be more cautious for the future." — I anſwered, "I could not help feeling my defenceleſs ſituation, which thus laid me open to receive the moſt humiliating inſults from a Man, who, as he had withdrawn me from all other protec-

protection, had a double call to protect me himſelf." — "He begged me, for God's ſake, and his more immediate ſake, not to behave to him with ſuch a repelling indifference; that my harſhneſs would drive him to diſtraction, and he might be tempted by his deſpair to commit an act for which he ſhould ever condemn himſelf. What, (continued he,) will Mrs. *Finch* think? She already begins to have ſcruples; but I aſſured her ſolemnly we were married, on the ſuppoſition that you would ſtill be kind enough to join with me in this *pious fraud.*" — I replied, "Would to Heaven I had not put it out of my power to refuſe any longer my participation of your falſehood — It is now too late, but it will be a warning to me for the future never to commit an illaudable action, that good may reſult from it — I will never as long I live again deviate from the ſtricteſt truth in the minuteſt inſtance. I am ſure I am ſufficiently puniſhed for ſtepping out of the right path."

"It is very true, (ſaid he,) I doubt we have fallen into a greater inconvenience to avoid the leſs; but, however, your mind ſhall, at all events, be made eaſy: I will this morning, to convince you of my ſincere and honourable intention, take a ride to *B*—, and there procure a licence, that every

every thing may be performed in due order. Will that, my dear Girl, content you?" —I anſwered, "I certainly wiſhed to have my doubts removed, as at that time I was more miſerable then I could find words to expreſs." He than, as an earneſt that I forgave him, and believed him ſincere, intreated me to look chearfully, and behave to him as I uſed to do.

By accident a button came off his waiſtcoat. He ſaid, he could not wear it. Mrs. *Finch* brought him another. Juſt before he went out (Mrs. *Finch* being in the room,) he came up to me and kiſſed me, and bid me amuſe myſelf in his abſence; "You have not been accuſtomed to part with your Huſband, (ſaid he,) I will ſoon return to you."—I replied only by wiſhing him a pleaſant ride.

The waiſtcoat he pulled off laid on a chair. I was going to take it up, that a Servant might carry it up ſtairs, when, by one of the greateſt acts of Providence, the key of the *porte-feuille* fell out of the pocket. Inſtantly the thought darted into my brain, of his haſtily putting up ſome papers. I believe, circumſtanced as I was, and dubious of his real intentions, few people will blame me for feeling a ſtrong inclination to know the purport of thoſe papers, and now I had it in my power of gratifying a curioſity,

ſity, in which I was ſo nearly intereſted. Whatever cenſures I might incur appeared trivial to me; I, therefore, locked the door to prevent a ſurprize, and, with trembling hands and aching heart, began to explore my deſtiny; I felt as if I was juſt going to unfold the inevitable volume of Fate; and yet a ſecret hope whiſpered ſome degree of comfort to my ſoul. But, oh! how ſhall I ever find words to expreſs the horror with which I was ſeized when the blackeſt and baſeſt treachery opened itſelf to my view! I found a Letter nearly finiſhed; judge of my aſtoniſhment on reading the three firſt words. It began, *My dear Bently!* — I rubbed my eyes, doubting their viſual faculty; ſtill the ſame fatal words preſented themſelves; yet how did my diſtreſs encreaſe as I peruſed what followed; I can never forget the contents. Ah! the indelible wound they made on my heart can never be healed; ſtill it rankles, ſtill it pains me on recollection. It ran thus:

"*My dear* BENTLY!

"I am infinitely indebted to you for the ſervices you have done me, in furthering my revenge on the haughty *Clevelands*. I did them too much honour ever to ſollicit their conſent. I have my Charmer now

now intirely in my power; I ſee ſhe is mortified at my not fulfilling the promiſes I made her; ſhe is impatient to have the knot tied; I am even more impatient than ſhe to have my wiſhes compleated. Oh! how the proud wretches will rave when they find this rejected man has triumphed over the virtue of their houſe! What an addition to my raptures with my lovely *Elizabeth*, to glut my ſoul with vengeance on them! *I* think I ſee them all ſoliciting in their turn, that I would condeſcend to repair the honour of their family, by marrying their fair Daughter; I believe I ſhall not be hard hearted; I ſhall certainly relent, after I have convinced them of my ſuperiority. Yes, repugnant as I have hitherto been to the thoughts of matrimony, when I have wrung all their hearts I ſhall be induced to do them the favour of receiving their Daughter from their hands; but I will firſt make them ſenſible I am doing them a favour. As to my fair Charge, though ſhe has pouted pretty much on ſome little freedoms, by way of prelude, which I have taken with her, I dare ſay I ſhall not have much trouble. Indeed I ſhould have a better chance of ſucceeding, did I not apprehend ſome little oppoſition from the conſcientious Mrs. *Finch*; I wiſh you had placed ſomebody

elſe

elſe here in her ſtead, with a more flexible and commodious way of thinking; however, I have given her to underſtand, that although I have not ſhared Lady *Elizabeth*'s bed here, that every part of the ceremony has paſſed, ſo that I have paved the way as eaſy as the caſe will allow for myſelf, when I become more reſolute in my attacks.

" Though I have ſaid ſo before, I muſt repeat again, I am aſtoniſhed how you could ſo well go through your part; how you could preſerve your heart; for ſhe certainly is a moſt lovely creature; but I really muſt continue of the ſame opinion that you are a coward at the bottom, and trembled at the idea of my reſentment. However that may be, I am ſtill obliged to you, as I could never have brought my matters to ſo fair an iſſue without your aſſiſtance. I have a ſcheme in petto, which my Charmer, with all her penetration, has not the leaſt idea of."—

Here the fatal and infernal ſcrowl ended. While I was reading it, I felt the ſame kind of ſickiſhneſs come over me which I before deſcribed, but now I quite loſt my eye-ſight. After ſome time I recovered myſelf, but found I was laying on the floor, from which, I conjectured, I had been in a fainting fit. I ſtill found myſelf much indiſ-

diſpoſed; a flood of tears came to my relief, and ſome water, which I met with in the room, recovered me ſufficiently to enable me to finiſh this diabolical Letter. I knew not what courſe to take, but I had fixed in my mind never more to behold the face of *Freeland*, if poſſible; nor ſhould the ſevereſt tortures the invention of an Inquiſitor could furniſh, have induced me to give my hand to ſuch a wretch, even if he had in earneſt ſolicited it. I endeavoured to compoſe my mind, and, by an extraordinary exertion of my ſpirits, effected my purpoſe. I deſired Mrs. *Finch* to accompany me into the garden. I there aſked her, if ſhe knew a perſon by the name of *Bently?* and whether he and Sir *Thomas Freeland* were intimate? She anſwered, they were particularly intimate; that Sir *Thomas* uſed frequently to viſit him here, and that ſhe was Houſekeeper to him. I then made her deſcribe his perſon, which left me no room to doubt he was the identical perſon who had pretended to be my Lover. I then careleſsly aſked her about the neighbourhood, and what were the towns which were neareſt, and many queſtions of that ſort. I took notice, there was a gate in the garden, which led into the road; I begged ſhe would be ſo good as to go into the next town, which was only a mile off, to pro-

cure me ſome ſilks for embroidery. As ſhe had ſtrict orders to obey me in every thing, ſhe made not the leaſt oppoſition to my deſire, but immediately ſat off. I then told one of the Maids, I found myſelf a good deal indiſpoſed, and ſhould go and lay down on the bed; deſired her to keep the houſe quiet, and, if Sir *Thomas* returned, to beg he would not diſturb me. I went up ſtairs, and, filling my pockets with what little matters I had brought off with me, I locked my chamber-door, and, ſtealing down again, haſtily traverſed the garden, and let myſelf out of the gate. Fear lent wings to my feet; I walked three hours as faſt as I could without ſtopping; I by that time came in ſight of a ſmall town; I entered a houſe at the beginning of it, and begged the Miſtreſs to let me have a little milk, for I was almoſt famiſhed and parched with thirſt. She very humanely ſupplied my wants. Fatigue now came on me very faſt, yet I again ſat off. I had not proceeded far before I ſaw a ſtage-coach; I called to the Driver to ſtop and take me in; I was accommodated with a place. It was indifferent to me where they were going, as long as I was ſafe out of the reach of the baſe *Freeland*. I ſuppreſſed my feelings, leſt my emotions might excite the curioſity of my fellow-travellers, but they

ſeemed

ſeemed plain, honeſt folks, too attentive to their own concerns to intereſt themſelves with the buſineſs of others.

I got a lodging at the Inn where the coach reſted. I had deſigned to proſecute my journey the next day, by the ſame method, but the fatigues both of body and mind, which I had undergone, threw me into a fever. I had the good fortune to fall into the hands of honeſt people; yet ſtill my illneſs, and the expences attendant on it, reduced my whole ſtock of money to a few ſhillings. Good God! what was now my ſituation! I, who had been uſed to affluence and grandeur, now to be reduced by illneſs, laying at an Inn, on a wretched bed, without friends or money, at above ſeventy miles from my own home, and doubtful if I ſhould find an aſylum there, if they had known my diſtreſs. The reflections which my forlorn condition excited, rather retarded than forwarded my recovery. As ſoon, however, as I had ſtrength, I wrote a Letter to the friend I mentioned in the beginning of my Narrative; in her's I encloſed one to my Father, penned in the moſt dutiful and pathetic manner that one in my ſtate could be ſuppoſed to write. "I repreſented, in the ſtrongeſt terms, my wretched fortune, and urged him, on my knees, to reſtore me to

my home, or place me any where he ſhould think proper. I begged my friend to intercede for me with my relations, as my diſtreſs demanded pity from the moſt obdurate heart; that unleſs they ſpeedily lent me ſome ſuccour, I muſt fall a prey to wretchedneſs, as I was conſtrained to part with my watch, and a few rings, in order to diſcharge my Doctor's bill. No words can expreſs my anxiety till I received an anſwer; at length, when my patience and fortitude were nearly exhauſted, the much-wiſhed for, much-dreaded Letter arrived. My impatience to peruſe the contents, and apprehenſions what the contents might prove, almoſt made me incapable of breaking the ſeal. It came from the young Lady. Good God! how harſh were the expreſſions which my Parents uſed in ſpeaking of me! Nothing I had ſuffered, or could have ſuffered, was too bad for ſuch a wretch as they ſtiled me. My late friend, I dare ſay, did not ſoften them at all. I could plainly perceive, by her manner, that ſhe believed me infamous, and the ſcanty portion of pity ſhe allowed me, was ſo mingled with contempt and reproaches, as to make it ſtill more corroſive to my heart. I found I muſt not expect to receive the leaſt credit from my aſſertions of innocence, and that I had (indeed ſo had the whole family,)

family,) been a dupe to the joint artifices of two baſe, deſigning men. The ſtory, as my Correſpondent ſaid, wore not the face of probability. For my ſake, ſhe hoped my family would act as if they believed it, but it was doing the greateſt violence to Senſe and Reaſon to allow it to be true; ſhe likewiſe hoped I had eſcaped with my honour unſtained, but that no one would ever believe I could be near a week in a houſe with ſo *deſigning* a man, as I deſcribed him, without ſuppoſing he had made every advantage of it he had it in his power to do; that perhaps he had given me an excuſe for yielding to his purpoſes; for, ſituated as I was, how could I have acted otherwiſe? It was a pity I could not have held out till I had prevailed on him to marry me; that my Father would ſend ſome perſon to fetch me away, but, ſhe was ſorry to ſay, ſhe was not impowered to tell me I ſhould be received at home; ſhe knew not what were my Lord's deſigns for me; ſhe hoped I would not endeavour to hold a correſpondence with her, as ſhe was concerned to inform me, her family would inſiſt on all connections ceaſing between us."

This was the ſubſtance of her Letter. Though from the well-known diſpoſition of my Father and Mother, as well as from the offences I had been guilty of towards

them, I could not with any reaſon expect to be forgiven, yet I had ſomehow buoyed myſelf up with ſome kind of hope. I knew I had been cruelly treated to incite me to take the ſteps I had; I knew my ſufferings were infinite in conſequence of my diſobedience, and my penitence was proportionable; and now, when I found every deluſive hope entirely cut off, and read the bitter taunts and ſevere contemptuous pity of a once-loved Friend, I own all comfort forſook me. I ſunk into the deepeſt deſpair, and thought of nothing but to find the means of ending my wretched exiſtence. The deſire, however, of living to have my wounded fame cleared from the cenſures of the raſh young, and the ill-natured old, joined to the natural dread of diſſolution, induced me to wait patiently till my change came.

But barely recovered from my illneſs, this additional ſtroke cauſed a relapſe, and by the time the perſon arrived, who was my Mother's Woman, I was at the point of death. A long time my life was doubtful; but a natural good conſtitution baffled both my diſorder and misfortunes, and carried me thro' *them*, to ſuſtain ſtill greater.

This Woman told me, "I was not to entertain the leaſt hope of being reſtored to the favour of my Family: That they could

not

not bear to ſee me abandoned to poverty and miſery, but that they muſt ſtill look on me as dead to them and all the world." I replied, "I would ſupport, without murmuring, any hardſhip Heaven and my Parents thought fit to inflict: That I only hoped to have ſome aſylum, where I might wear out my wretched days in penitence and tears." — "That aſylum (ſhe ſaid) ſhould be granted me as ſoon as ever my health was eſtabliſhed; till that was reſtored, I was to remain in a lodging ſhe would take for me in the town where ſhe found me, and from thence I was to be conveyed to *Bellman Caſtle*, in *Wales*, where I was to reſide." I made not the leaſt oppoſition to theſe meaſures. Indeed, I did not think I ſhould live long, therefore was indifferent where that portion of life ſhould be ſpent.

One day before we left the lodgings, my companion came running into the room, with all the wildneſs of deſpair and horror in her countenance. Inſtantly I caught the alarm; my boſom foreboded ſome fatal news! I haſtily interrogated her what had happened? She fell a weeping, and wringing her hands in the greateſt agony. "Oh! he is dead! he is dead!" was all I could for ſome time get out of her. "Wretched, unhappy Lady *Elizabeth!* you were born

for the deſtruction of your Family."—"For pity's ſake, (cried I, in all the agitation of grief,) for pity's ſake let me know what you mean?"—"Your Brother! your Brother! he is dead! Oh! that I ſhould live to ſee him baſely murdered! He, whom I fondly nurſed!" After ſome time, ſhe ſhewed me a Letter, which ſhe had received from ſome of the Domeſtics of our Family, with the fatal heart-breaking news of my eldeſt Brother's being killed in a duel by the villainous *Freeland*.—The cruel circumſtances were theſe. My dear unfortunate Brother, who I really believe poſſeſſed more tenderneſs for me than any one beſide, ſwore he would never reſt, till he had called the baſe betrayer of his wretched Siſter to account, for her ſeduction. He found him out, and upbraiding him with his perfidy, bid him defend his life. They fought with inveteracy on both ſides; *Freeland* firſt fell to the ground. My dear Brother, at the ſame time, was mortally wounded; he deſired his Second to bear him to his antagoniſt; he was ſupported on his knees, by the ſide of *Freeland*; Death was already making haſty ſtrides towards both; my poor Brother ſaid to the dying wretch, "*Freeland*, you are going to give an account of all your miſdeeds; I ſhall not long

ſurvive

ſurvive you, I feel myſelf dying; as ſome atonement for your crimes, give my departing ſoul this one aſſurance, have I drawn my ſword in defence of an infamous ſtrumpet? Am I ſacrificed to a baſe proſtitute, or have I bravely loſt my life in the defence of a once tenderly loved Siſter's honour? Has her virtue triumphed over your artifices? Speak truth, ſay but yes, and I die not in vain."—"Still, (cried the barbarous inhuman wretch,) ſtill linger in doubt, and die diſſatisfied."—"Villain! (exclaimed my dying Brother,) thou canſt not ſpeak truth, or that would clear her fame."—"If life was lent me, (cried the other,) I would wring your heart with the recital; but remember, though I die, I have triumphed over the haughty *Cleveland.*" His impious ſoul fled with theſe words. Oh! that I had been preſent, ſurely I might have convinced my dear unhappy Brother of his miſerable Siſter's innocence; I might have ſoftened the horrors of death. He breathed his laſt, as they were conveying him from the field of blood and death.

The bitter curſes of my Parents were caſt on me for depriving them of their firſt born Child, who was the honour and delight of his family—What an aggravation of their diſtreſs to loſe him, fighting in revenge of the injuries a worthleſs Daughter

drew upon herſelf. How was all my grief redoubled by this ſevere blow! I loathed the light; I called hourly on death to relieve me from my unheard of and unpitied diſtreſs.

I was hurried away to this ſeat of deſolation with no companion but the ſenſe and painful memory of my misfortunes. I was not permitted to paſs out of the Caſtle gates; the draw-bridge was kept up. Alas! how vain were theſe precautions; where ſhould I go? My miſeries clave to my heart—I could not diveſt myſelf of recollection. As my ſorrows ſubſided, my confinement became more irkſome. I ſometimes languiſhed for ſociety, and "the buſy haunts of men." In compaſſion to my ſufferings, and to afford me a ſmall ſhare of comfort, I was allowed ſome books; but they were of a nature to excite melancholy ideas rather than conſolation, a balm I ſtood much in need of. From a ſenſe at laſt of my heavy puniſhment for faults unwittingly committed, I began to grow fretful and moroſe; I hated the world which had thus ſhut its face againſt me. To be thus immured from the age of nineteen, appeared to me a ſpecies of the utmoſt barbarity; but my regrets only ſerved to render my captivity leſs ſupportable. Time, however, at laſt reconciled

ciled me to my deſtiny, and I have for ſo many years ceaſed to repine, that I ſhould be unwilling again to enter into life.

This Hiſtory, my dear *Louiſa*, will ſatisfy your curioſity at the expence of your ſenſibility. I expect to hear you have ſhed a tear over the venerable Priſoner's mournful ſtory. I have not time to add more at preſent. Let me hear ſoon from you; remember to be particular.

Adieu. Love me always, as you are tenderly loved by your

EMMA CLEVELAND.

LETTER LXV.

To Lady CLEVELAND.

I Have, indeed, ſhed many tears over the recital you was ſo good as to ſend me. I heartily ſympathize in the diſtreſsful ſituation of my unfortunate Kinſwoman. But I hope I ſhall not cut ſuch a queer figure at ſixty-five as you deſcribe her's to be — You think her portrait like me — I really tremble for Lord *Stretton:* How will he like ſuch an old Hag? But you know he muſt take me for better and for worſe, and make the beſt of a bad market. My dear

Emma, I would be chearful, and try to play with my pen, but it will not do. You have deſired me to be particular; reluctantly I obey your commands; I ſay reluctantly in this inſtance, becauſe my news is of a kind to make you uneaſy: Your poor Friend is very ill. My Lord and Sir *Charles Beville* are both with him. It is their peculiar province to comfort and ſupport each other. I ſincerely hope he will ſoon recover; but he has been drooping ever ſince this unhappy affair. Oh! how my blood boils, when I think of the accurſed Authors of this evil! I am not acquainted with the nature of his diſorder, but, by the account of my Lord, I apprehend it to be a decline, brought on by the repeated trials and afflictions he has undergone. You may be aſſured, my dear Creature, every thing will be done that can be of ſervice to him, therefore make yourſelf as eaſy as you poſſibly can. Let us hope his youth and conſtitution will ſtruggle through this diſorder. I am in hourly expectation of a Letter from my Lord.

Sir *Charles Beville* went to our Friend from *Hartley-Lodge*, the reſidence of Mr. *Cleveland*; what the reſult of the viſit is I do not yet know; I will give you the earlieſt intelligence of that buſineſs. Your dear *Fanny* ſits by me, and ſends her tenderest

dereſt love. Heaven ſend good news! here is a Letter arrived.

Not ſo favourable as I wiſhed; his ſymptoms rather increaſe. I almoſt wiſh I had not begun my Letter to you — Yet I believe you had better hear the worſt — My fears and affection perhaps magnify the danger. Come, come, we muſt not, by anticipation, augment our preſent diſtreſs: I hope my Lord's apprehenſions are groundleſs. What am I ſaying? I ſhall alarm you more than there is any occaſion for. I ſhall write as ſoon as I gain any intelligence. Adieu! Heaven preſerve you, and proportion your ſtrength to the heavy trials aſſigned you in this life. Thus prays

Your faithful,

LOUISA STRETTON.

LETTER LXVI.

To Lady LOUISA STRETTON.

LOUISA! my deareſt *Louiſa!* let me know the worſt — My boding heart already tells me the moſt amiable, the moſt loved of Men, is no more. What do I ſay? Is he then loſt to the world and me?

Conceal

Conceal not, I adjure you, conceal not the fatal truth from me — and God give me ſtrength to bear the inevitable ſtroke; or, if not impious, be merciful, righteous Heaven, and ſuffer me to ſink under it, and find that reſt in the peaceful grave, which Malice and Envy have deprived me of here! Oh, *Louiſa*, again I intreat you, hide not from your wretched Friend the leaſt circumſtance. Good God! am I never to ſee an end to my miſery! Like the rolling billows ſtill muſt my diſtreſſes follow one another! — Oh! it is too much — Yet, great God, thy will be done. Teach me reſignation to thy unfathomable decrees. My heart, my poor heart ſinks within me. Speak comfort, if poſſible, to your unhappy

EMMA CLEVELAND.

LETTER LXVII.

To Lady CLEVELAND.

SPEAK comfort to thee! thou dear afflicted Mourner;—Ah! that thy *Louiſa* could pour into thy torn boſom the balm of conſolation; that ſhe could ſuppreſs the torrent of woe, which is this moment guſhing from her eyes, to enliven thine with one

one cheering ray of hope.—Hope, alas! where art thou fled? Oh! my *Emma*, it is intombed with the Clay-cold —— I cannot proceed. Let your own fore-boding heart ſpeak the reſt. All that was amiable, all that was tender and lovely, is now no more. Heaven grant you ſtrength of mind to ſupport this blow with fortitude. I cannot ſpeak comfort to thee. Oh! that I was with you to mingle my grief with yours. — Merciful God! ſhall a *Hotham* and a *Cleveland* riot in all the pleaſures of life? — And muſt he, the moſt deſerving of Mortals, in the bloom of his age, fall a martyr to infamy! Is it juſt! — Oh! God forgive me! I think it is too ſevere.

I ought to conſole you, but, alas, I am incapable; I feel too much to attempt to mitigate your diſtreſs. I believe ſome people are deſtined to be unhappy. You were ordained to be the *Child of Sorrow*. My mind is too agitated to deſcend to particulars; ſometime hence, perhaps, I may.

Adieu! and think, except yourſelf, none can be more afflicted than

LOUISA STRETTON.

LET-

LETTER LXVIII.

To Lady LOUISA STRETTON.

YES, *Louiſa!* I am doomed to drink the bitter cup of affliction, pure, and unmixed. Why ſhould I repine? Why pour forth my wretched ſoul in fruitleſs complainings? Heaven, inexorable Heaven, is deaf to my anguiſh, and has marked me out for the Child of Sorrow. Heap, then, heap diſtreſſes on me, till I can bear no more, till my inſatiable enemies cry out, "Enough! now let the poor wretch depart in peace!" And whither ſhall the poor wretch fly for conſolation? Oh! all, all conſolation is ſhut againſt her! Ah! let no one undertake my cauſe. I ſeek not now to be vindicated; I have loſt all that made life deſirable; my better part has fallen a Martyr; why, why does not my heart break?

Oh! my *Louiſa*, what a blank muſt the remaining portion of my ſad exiſtence prove! How have I cheated myſelf! I fancied him already dead, and that my affections were ſuch I ſhould have paid to a departed Saint; a veneration! Oh! I find there was ſomething earthly in my regard, or why ſhould I ſo ſeverely regret his loſs? He was dead to me before, and yet the anguiſh which

which now cleaves to my heart, when I am told the cold grave has got him, gives me but too much cauſe to ſuſpect I ſtill loved improperly,

"Nor wiſh'd an Angel whom I lov'd a Man."

Yes, it muſt be ſo, and Heaven puniſhes me accordingly.

Let me have all the ſad particulars, I intreat you; you need not be apprehenſive of the conſequences; even perhaps I may ſooner be reſtored to a more compoſed ſtate from a knowledge of the whole. Retail to me the minuteſt circumſtance; let my poor boſom be wounded in every vein with the melancholy recital? Am I not a *Child of Sorrow?* Do not then deny me my allotted portion.

It may be to anſwer ſome infinitely wiſe purpoſe, that I am thus delivered over to misfortune; perhaps to make Parents cautious how they rend the hearts of their hapleſs Children. Oh! that I may be the laſt ſacrifice! then ſhall I not have ſuffered in vain! But why have *my* diſtreſſes drawn down the wrath of Heaven on the dear innocent victim that now lies dead? Ah! I recall the word; Heaven has taken him to itſelf, to beſtow on him that felicity which could not be obtained in this world. I have *been*, and ſtill *am*, the victim devoted to be for ever miſerable.

What

What muſt that wretch be, who has outlived her laſt and only hope? I am that deſpairing wretch. How much, how very much to be pitied, is your

EMMA CLEVELAND.

LETTER LXIX.

To Lady CLEVELAND.

My deareſt EMMA,

I Ought, perhaps, to ſuppreſs the melancholy circumſtances relative to our dear Friend's diſſolution, leſt I ſhould be tearing open your wounds, inſtead of pouring into them the balm of conſolation; yet ſometimes the indulgence of our ſorrows effects a cure, as the rapid ſtream which flows without obſtruction, ſooner waſtes itſelf.

With this latent hope I will proceed to give you all the information in my power. — My Lord found him in a very dangerous ſtate, but flattered himſelf that the care and advice he meant to procure for him, together with his friendly participation of his ſorrows, might in time reſtore him; but, alas! the blow was ſtruck; the cold hand of Death had already ſealed his doom; and he ſeemed waiting, with a mournful patience, the inevitable ſummons.

You

You may judge how extremely Lord *Stretton* was affected, on ſeeing the melancholy alteration in his Friend's features, a too plain indication of a broken heart! He ſuppreſſed his emotions, though exquiſitely painful. "Come, courage, my dear *Courtenay*, (cried he, preſſing his hand,) what is become of your fortitude? Let not thoſe curſed wretches thus triumph in your defeat. Your virtue ſhould be your ſupport in this day of trial." — "Alas! my dear *Stretton*, (ſaid the unhappy man, ſhaking his head,) my fortitude is entirely overcome; I ſink beneath my misfortunes, and thoſe I have, unhappily and undeſignedly, as Heaven can atteſt, brought on the moſt amiable and moſt loved of mortals. Oh! there, 'tis there I am wounded unto death! I could have wiſhed to have dragged through a painful life, to have ſeen the vindication aſſerted of that Angelic Sufferer. But I feel my approaching diſſolution; I feel the inward indications of death; they may not be viſible to you;

"For, ah! Affliction ſteals with trackleſs flight,
Silent the ſtroke ſhe gives, but not leſs keen;
And bleak Misfortune, like an Eaſtern blight,
Sheds black deſtruction, tho' it flies unſeen."

My Lord begged him not to indulge ſuch melancholy ideas, but rather endeavour to give way to hope. "I have, (cried he,)

he,) deluded myſelf with the phantom Hope, till I can be cheated no longer; yet all the ills of life I could have borne but this; to ſee the woman my ſoul fondly eternally doated on, — to ſee her doomed to wretchedneſs,— and now, by the baſeſt perfidy, conſigned to infamy; and I, to be made the accurſed inſtrument. Oh! it is more than mortal can endure. Oh! that I had never ſeen the light; that mountains had overwhelmed and buried me, rather than to have been the cauſe of grief to the beſt of her Sex! I ſaid, I could have wiſhed to live to ſee her vindicated; yet I think the teſtimony of a dying man may have ſome weight with the world. Since that idea has ſuggeſted itſelf, I have been impatient for death. I ſhall requeſt of you, my dear and valued Friend, to take this Paper, and deliver it yourſelf to Lord *Cleveland*. He thinks I have injured him, ſurely he will give ſome credit to the aſſertions I make in my laſt moments. I call all the Hoſt of Heaven to witneſs to the truth; and may that Heaven never receive my wretched ſoul if I have ſigned a falſhood. He now grew extremely languid. My Lord prevailed on him to lay down; he ſoon fell into a kind of doze, but very diſturbed. The next day he was apparently worſe, his ſpeech faultered, and he had many convulſive catch-

ings,

ings, which, though but ſlight, were a too ſure prognoſtic of his approaching death.

About noon Sir *Charles Beville* arrived. He flew to his dying Friend, on the ſummons Lord *Stretton* diſpatched to him; he indulged the hope that the news he had to impart would be a reſtoring cordial to the unfortunate *Courtenay*; but though it could not reſtore, it certainly ſmoothed the bed of death. A gleam of joy animated his ſunken eyes; he eſſayed to utter a prayer of thankſgiving to Heaven, but the words died on his lips, which could ſcarcely move; he fainted, and continued a long time inſenſible. The firſt effect which Sir *Charles*'s information had on the dying man, inſpired the two Friends with the hope of his recovering by degrees; but Lord *Stretton* ſaid, that bright emanation which ſparkled in his eyes and features was merely momentary; it fled, and never more returned. Towards the evening the faintings and convulſive catchings returned quicker, yet the intervals were clearer; in them he was perfectly ſenſible; he bleſſed them in the moſt pathetic and tender manner. He took both their hands, and preſſing them between his, now almoſt death-cold, called on them both, by all the endearing ties of friendſhip, to undertake your cauſe, to labour to eſtabliſh your fame, to endeavour to reſtore you

to

to peace and happineſs, to deliver to you his earneſt wiſhes for your welfare; to tell you, he hoped to be conſtituted your Guardian Angel in the next world, to point out to you the flowery paths of happineſs, and ſhield you from future diſtreſs. He implored Heaven to comfort and ſupport you; and, as he believed this would be to you a great ſtroke of affliction, moſt heartily prayed it might be the laſt you ſhould ever know. He hoped his memory would not be painful to you, that you would receive conſolation in this happy iſſue of his ſorrows, and that you would rejoice that he had at laſt ſeen an end to his miſeries."

Neither of his Friends left him that night, and before morning dawned they performed the melancholy taſk of cloſing his eyes for ever.

Thus, my beloved Friend, you have before you an account which has filled all hearts with ſorrow. I wonder not at yours; but may it ſoon be mellowed into a ſoft, and not unpleaſing melancholy!

I will incloſe a copy of the written paper which our dear Friend gave in charge to my Lord. He intends waiting on Lord *Cleveland* in town, together with Sir *Charles Beville*. The treachery of the infamous *Hotham* will, I hope, be ſoon diſcovered.

Adieu!

Adieu! my deareſt, my amiable Friend, may Heaven comfort you, and reſtore you to happineſs!

Yours, for ever!

LOUISA STRETTON.

[*The incloſed Copy.*]

To Lord CLEVELAND.

"*My* LORD,

"WHEN the iron hand of Death has almoſt ſealed the eye-lids of man, and Diſſolution approaches with haſty ſtrides, all animoſities between him and his fellow creatures ſhould ceaſe; that is a period of time, when the moſt hardened and moſt abandoned have not been able any longer to ſuppreſs the dictates of Truth.

"The proſpect of death, as it removes the veil of prejudice, ſo does it leſſen the bias of intereſt; the greateſt criminal is then induced to make all the reparation in his power to thoſe whom he has injured. If thoſe, to whom Truth has been a ſtranger, may in the hour of death expect to be believed, has not he an indiſputable right to be credited, who never on any pretence uttered a falſity? As I ſhall no longer be reckoned among mankind when your Lordſhip peruſes this, I may be allowed to make that aſſertion in my own favour.

"I

"I beſeech you then, on the word of a dying man, and one who would, in the day of health and proſperity, have ſcorned to receive the moſt glaring advantage at the expence of his veracity, I beſeech and conjure you to pay a regard to my aſſeverations.

"You have been moſt baſely and cruelly deceived by the wicked and abandoned woman, who conſpired againſt the fame of your injured Wife. The purity of Angels is not more clearly demonſtrative than her's. You know I loved her; but you could have no idea how fervently, how innocently I loved her; I mean not to deceive you; I mean to convince you, that, although my love for her ſurpaſſed that of all the world, I would not, had it been poſſible ſhe could have offered it, I would not have received a favour which ſhould have leſſened her in my eſteem. I loved her ſoul, and hoped, that as our union here had been fruſtrated, it would have been made perfect in Heaven. I have ever kept that point in view; ſhe has done the ſame.

I would only wiſh you to ſuffer yourſelf to be convinced; ſee with your own eyes, and hear with your own ears, and do not receive every thing through that falſe medium you have too long been the dupe of.

Dear, injured Excellence! how great muſt have been her ſufferings! The anguiſh the reflection

reflection cauſes in my breaſt, has corroded in my vitals, till the cords of life are eaten through. Yes, my Lord, I die a Martyr to the diſtreſs I have innocently brought on the beſt of Women. You never knew her worth. It may be expected I ſhould urge my former wrongs; how you baſely ſtole in upon my little hoard of treaſure, the wealth of the world to me, and cruelly robbed me of it; but I am ſilent; a dying man ſhould forget his reſentments; it is now for your unhappy, ill treated Wife I plead; nay, 'tis your own cauſe I plead; it is, that you will aſſert your own honour, and eſtabliſh it, by removing the cloud of calumny which at preſent obſcures it. Be not deaf, then, to your own advantage.

"I ſend herewith all the Letters I ever received from that moſt excellent of Women. You would not ſuffer yourſelf to read her Papers; I cannot have a doubt but they are deſtroyed, becauſe, did they appear, they would be ſo many teſtimonials of her innocence and virtue. My noble Friend, Lord *Stretton*, who will bear this to you, and who knows every paſſage of my life, will be better able to ſatisfy your doubts than I at preſent am. This taſk is too much; already I am hurrying to the ſilent tomb; a few days, and I ſhall ceaſe to be at all. Let my laſt words have weight; let them induce you

to examine minutely; the examination will be productive of happineſs in future to yourſelf.

EDWARD COURTENAY.

LETTER LXX.

To Lady CLEVELAND.

LET me intreat you, my ever dear *Emma*, to indulge a proſpect of an happy iſſue to the buſineſs which induced Lord *Stretton* to go to *London*. I have very flatering hopes, nay, certain ones. When my Lord arrived in town, he waited on Lord *Cleveland*, but found him abſent on a little tour with his infamous companion. Lord *Stretton* left a meſſage, with ſtrict orders to the Porter to be punctual in the delivery of it, importing, he had done himſelf the pleaſure of calling on him upon ſome very urgent and particular buſineſs, and would renew his viſit as ſoon as his Lordſhip ſhould do him the honour of apprizing him of his return. He waited, but received no ſummons, which ſurprized him the more, as he had certain intelligence of Lord *Cleveland*'s being in town: He therefore reſolved within himſelf not to let the affair ſuffer any delay on his ſide, but

to call again. Lord *Cleveland* was out.—When would he be at home?—The Porter could not ſay.—Then you muſt give me leave to wait for him. Accordingly Lord *Stretton* was ſhewn into a room. Preſently he heard the ruſtling of ſilk, and in came a Lady, whom my Lord immediately conjectured to be the Fiend *Hotham*. "My Lord *Stretton*, I think," (with a formal curt'ſey).—"My name is *Stretton*, Madam," (a ſideling bow on his ſide;) I have buſineſs with Lord *Cleveland*, and am waiting in expectation of his coming in. I ſhall acquaint his Lordſhip of the remiſſneſs of his Porter: I left a meſſage here ten days ſince, which I apprehend has never been delivered to him."—"Indeed, my Lord, I cannot tell; but if your Lordſhip will favour me with any meſſage, I will take care to apprize my Lord *Cleveland* of it."—"My buſineſs is of a nature which concerns Lord *Cleveland* to be informed of perſonally; I ſhall wait till his return." To be ſure, my Lord was ſeemingly deficient in good manners; but he ſaid he did not conſider her as a Woman, only as a She-Devil; therefore his behaviour was cavalier to the laſt degree. She, however, officiouſly put many queſtions to him, which he anſwered moſtly by monoſyllables. Then to ſhew ſhe was polite, whatever he might

be, ſhe aſked, "Would not his Lordſhip chuſe to take ſome chocolate?"—"Not any thing, (he replied,) but if it was agreeable to her, he would be glad to be left alone till the return of Lord *Cleveland*; and he ſhould likewiſe be obliged to her if ſhe would let notice be given to his Servants, that they might go home and do as he had ordered them." I believe he gave this direction in a myſterious kind of way, on purpoſe to puzzle and perplex her. She ſeemed ready to burſt with paſſion, yet was fearful of giving it vent. What he meant to order his Servants to do was, to go to Sir *Charles Beville*, and requeſt his attendance to give the information he had received at *Hartley-Lodge*. But to proceed in rather a more methodical manner, I believe I had better here relate that circumſtance.

Sir *Charles Beville* informed Mr. *Cleveland* he was making the tour of the weſtern part of *England*, and recollecting his old Friend, had come about twenty miles out of his way to ſee him. Mr. *Cleveland* teſtified the pleaſure this civility gave him. They ſoon began diſcourſing on family concerns. Sir *Charles*, with the freedom which intimacy between gay young men allows, aſked what was become of the Lady he uſed to be ſo much attached to, and whether

whether the connection laſted; and then pretended to forget her name. *Cleveland* ſaid, "He was as much attached to her as ever, but that lately he had had ſome reaſons to doubt her conſtancy: Her name (ſaid he) is *Hotham*." — "*Hotham!* (repeated Sir *Charles*,) *Hotham!* why that is the name of a Woman your Couſin, Lord *Cleveland*, has had an affair with, and is fool enough to intend to marry, if he can get a Divorce from his Wife, who, I am told, is one of the moſt lovely, as well as moſt injured Women in the world."—"You ſurely miſtake, (cried *Cleveland*, in confuſion;) I cannot believe Lord *Cleveland* ever had any connection with her, though ſhe has been in the houſe with him."—"And is at this moment; at leaſt with him, if not at his houſe. I'll tell you.—About a fortnight ago, ſince I have been on this excurſion, we chanced to ſtop at the ſame Inn; I was told they were Lord and Lady *Cleveland*. I had ſeen the picture of her Ladyſhip, and was deſirous of a perſonal interview. I obtained it, but was much diſappointed, though ſhe is a good fine Woman. Now I will ſwear to their ſleeping together, becauſe their bed-room was next to mine. I aſked the Landlord the next morning, as I could not think this Lady was her whoſe portrait I had ſeen, but rather fancied, as

is very common, ſhe was only a travelling Wife. He acquainted me with her name, as he had picked up from Mrs. *Wilſon*, her Waiting-woman, who proved to be a near Relation of mine Hoſt's. So now I think I have let you into the ſecret of this buſineſs."

"My dear *Beville*, (ſaid *Cleveland*,) I have no reaſon in the world to doubt your intelligence; when I combine ſome circumſtances I am but too well convinced, that artful woman has made me a moſt conſummate dupe; and not only ſo, but I fear a villain."

He then proceeded to lay before Sir *Charles* the whole ſeries of her artifices to draw him in to engage in a ſcheme, which might render you and your Lord irreconcileable enemies, to prevent the poſſibility of your having a Son, as, in that caſe, the eſtate would, on Lord *Cleveland*'s death, devolve on him.—He plainly ſhewed it would not have been his intereſt to make a Divorce, as then my Lord had it in his power to marry again.—That in order to effect this more ſecurely, they together had formed a plan to make her an inmate of Lord *Cleveland*'s family.—But that he had found ſo much ambiguity in her Letters, and ſuch inconſiſtencies in her behaviour, as had made him very uneaſy; for to his plaineſt

plaineſt interrogatories he never could obtain an explicit anſwer. Sir *Charles* begged to be permitted to peruſe her Letters. "You will, I doubt, condemn me, (ſaid *Cleveland*,) but reflect I have great reaſon to hate Lord *Cleveland*; his behaviour to me will juſtify any injury I do him; but I fear I have been drawn in to deſtroy the happineſs of an amiable woman to ſerve an infamous one."—"That Lady *Cleveland* is amiable, every tongue muſt allow, (returned Sir *Charles*;) if you have been inſtrumental to her diſtreſs you ought to be hanged." *Beville* then, in brief, related what he knew concerning you. *Cleveland* ſeemed very much affected, and ſhewed great contrition.—He ſwore he would make all the atonement in his power, as well to repair the wrongs he had been induced to act, as to be revenged on Mrs. *Hotham* for her perfidy to him. Sir *Charles* was too well pleaſed with the effect to examine the motive too nicely: He peruſed the Letters, and after expatiating on them, and giving the Writer to the Devil, he aſked *Cleveland* whether he was in earneſt as to his good intentions.—He ſwore he would blow that infernal wretch up, though his own deſtruction was the conſequence. Sir *Charles* applauded his reſolution, and promiſed him his ſafety ſhould be ſecured.

He then, in order to go on ſure grounds, adviſed *Cleveland* to write in a peremptory ſtile to the Intriguer, and inſiſt on a poſitive anſwer. Immediately *Cleveland* penned a Letter, filled with reproaches of her infamous deſertion of his cauſe, and turning his weapons on himſelf, and a great deal more to the ſame purpoſe: This he ſent by a ſpecial Meſſenger. In her Anſwer ſhe throws off the maſk; ſo well is ſhe convinced that ſhe ſhall bring about a Divorce; and ſhe ſays Lord *Cleveland* is bound, under the forfeiture of an immenſe ſum, to marry her. Enraged to madneſs at her avowed baſeneſs, *Cleveland* gave all her Letters to Sir *Charles*, who inſtantly poſted up to *London* with his prize. He haſted to ſpeak comfort to his Friend.—But I will not repeat what muſt harrow up your boſom. Let me return.

Lord *Cleveland* at laſt arrived. Lord *Stretton* took care he ſhould not have an opportunity of ſpeaking with Mrs. *Hotham* firſt. He went into the hall to meet him. He introduced himſelf without ceremony to your Lord, and began by opening his buſineſs directly. I doubt not Lord *Stretton* was eloquent on the occaſion.—He ſaid, your Lord ſeemed diſtreſſed even at the beginning, and fearful leſt the vile wretch *Hotham* ſhould hear.—Lord *Stretton*,

above

above all diſguiſes, bade him not apprehend danger or interruption from her, as he had it in his power to ſilence her effectually. He then, in the moſt pathetic manner, related the death of our poor Friend, which he placed to its proper account. Lord *Cleveland* was ſtruck. He then proceeded to ſhow him all the Papers relative to this affair, from the beginning. I had given Lord *Stretton* all your Letters, and likewiſe that you wrote to your Siſter *Fanny*, on your *rencontre* with the unfortunate *Edward*, at *D*—. Lord *Cleveland* read the whole, and ſhed tears over them: He confeſſed he had had no idea of your ſufferings, and blamed himſelf very much for his conduct; but added, "he had never entertained the leaſt ſuſpicion of your infidelity, till his mind had been poiſoned by the inſinuations of the artful *Hotham*; that ſhe had entangled him with her wiles, and lured him on till ſhe could work him to any thing." — Lord *Stretton* told him, "He ought to make you every reparation now in his power; he could not reſtore the dead, but that your fame was ſuffering in the opinion of an ill-judging world; and that if he had the leaſt ſenſe of honour or juſtice remaining, he muſt know it was highly incumbent on him publickly to repair the injuries his ſuſpicions had occa-

ſioned you. At this juncture Sir *Charles Beville* made his appearance; he had it ſo amply in his power to convince Lord *Cleveland*, that it was impoſſible a doubt ſhould remain; though, indeed, your Lord ſaid, "He wanted no other teſtimonials than thoſe he had already received, and he ſincerely wiſhed he had peruſed the Papers which Miſs *Woodville* had put into his hands, as then he ſhould have been earlier convinced of your innocence and worth, and then, as your ſufferings had not been ſo great, he might have entertained hopes of being forgiven."—Lord *Stretton* obſerved, "That there were reaſonable grounds for hopes, as you poſſeſſed ſo amiable and gentle a turn of mind."—"No, my Lord, no, (cried he;) it is impoſſible that ſhe can forget I have been the curſed cauſe of *Courtenay*'s death, and while ſhe regrets him, ſhe muſt hate and deteſt me; beſides, I never deſerved her love. I am confident I never acted by her as I ought to have done—My marrying her, or rather joining with her relations, to ſacrifice her to my baſe views, was culpable in the higheſt degree."—He told both the Gentlemen, he conſidered himſelf greatly indebted to them for the pains they had taken to ſhew him what a ſnake he had been foſtering in his boſom; but freely confeſſed,

confeſſed, he knew not how to extricate himſelf from the difficulties, his connection with her had, and he was fearful would further involve him, as ſhe had prevailed on him, in caſe the Divorce could not be obtained, to make her a very large Settlement, which would be to the prejudice of his Family to accede to. — "My dear Friends, (continued he,) if you can overcome this point, and teach me a way of avoiding granting this Devil a reward for her infamous practices, I ſhall be ever bound to do you ſervice." Lord *Stretton* ſaid, "He could foreſee no difficulty at all in this buſineſs, as they would only give her this alternative, to reſign the bond, or ſtand a proſecution for a forgery and perjuring herſelf, which, from her own Letters, could be ſo fully proved. This grand point obviated, was a great conſolation to Lord *Cleveland*; and with the aſſiſtance of his two able Counſellors he aſſumed courage enough to deſire Mrs. *Hotham* to make her appearance. She entered with a degree of confidence which ſtruck them with aſtoniſhment. Lord *Cleveland*, in a deciſive tone of voice, as if he expected obedience, aſked her for the Letters ſhe had received from Mr. *Cleveland*, concerning the treacherous conſpiracy they had been carrying on. This was ſtealing a

march on her Ladyſhip — She was not prepared for the attack — "Come, come, Madam, (ſaid Sir *Charles*,) no heſitation or evaſion; I have juſt left Mr. *Cleveland*, and have all your Letters to him in my poſſeſſion: Give up the Bonds you have inveigled from this Nobleman, to the injury of his fortune and moſt virtuous Wife, and you ſhall have your precious Letters returned to you."—"After ſhe has ſigned another Bond," ſaid Lord *Stretton*.—"And pray who are you that thus command me? And is it you, baſe Man, who uſe me thus?" "If you are are not ſatisfied with being commanded by us, you ſhall have the authority of the Civil Magiſtrate to convince you we go on ſure grounds."—When ſhe found bluſtering would not do, ſhe began to melt, but nothing could mollify the hearts of her Judges. Lord *Stretton*, by the concurrence of Lord *Cleveland*, drew up a Paper, which they ordered her to ſign. She pretended to be in violent hyſterics all the time, till Lord *Stretton* ſaid, "If ſhe was not able to hold her pen, he himſelf would guide her hand. She then, quite enraged, ſnatched the pen from Lord *Stretton*, and ſigned her name. When this was done, my Lord, who ſeemed to have the entire management of this affair, told the Lady ſhe might retire to her own apartment,

ment, but that Lord *Cleveland*'s poſt-chaiſe would be ready, at five the next morning, to convey her and her Friend Mrs. *Wilſon* to her own country-houſe, where, according as ſhe behaved, ſo ſhould ſhe be treated. She bounced out of the room, beſtowing execrations on them all.

Your Lord redoubled his acknowledgments to his guardian Angels, as he ſtiled them, and begged they would not leave him while this Fiend ſhould remain in the houſe, imagining, as he ſaid, ſhe would play the Devil with him, when ſhe found him unprotected. He complimented Lord *Stretton* on his addreſs throughout this buſineſs. Sir *Charles* ſmiled and ſaid, "His Lordſhip was particularly clever in things of this nature, and he thought he deſerved a *Patent* for getting rid of troubleſome Women."—His Protectors ſtaid with him till they had delivered the houſe from the Bundle of Iniquity, and then took leave of his Lordſhip, who propoſed ſetting out for *Cleveland-Place* the next day; from whence his intention is to write to your Ladyſhip. Lord *Stretton* accompanied Sir *Charles Beville* as far as *Holyhead*, in his way to *Ireland*, whither he is going to look at an eſtate. This was a ſudden thought, as they mentioned not the propoſed journey while they were here. From *Holyhead* my Lord came

acroſs

acroſs the Country to *Stretton-Houſe*. Our meeting, you may be ſure, was a melancholy one — The reflection on our loſs, and the affliction that loſs would occaſion you, damped every joy his return would otherwiſe have afforded me — But I will not dwell on what is paſt never to be recalled.

By Lord *Stretton*'s account Lord *Cleveland* ſeems in a very bad way; he hardly ate either at dinner or ſupper; on their remarking his little appetite, he ſaid, "He had not for many weeks ate more." But they both obſerved he drank a great deal. He called for a glaſs of brandy while at dinner; and inſtead of tea in the afternoon had a pint glaſs of rum and water, which my Lord ſays was half ſpirit, beſides a conſiderable quantity of wine.

I aſked my Lord a thouſand queſtions, whether Lord *Cleveland* really was penitent for his ill uſage of you. He anſwered, "he certainly was, as far as one could expect from a man poſſeſſed of very little ſenſibility. That he ſaid ſeveral times, "Poor dear Creature! what a raſcal I have been!" and ſuch expreſſions. Then he ſwore he did not believe there ever was a woman of more exemplary goodneſs and virtue; that he had ever implicitly believed you to be ſo; but that ſince his connection with Mrs. *Hotham*, (which, however,

however, had not been criminal till they came to town,) he was ſo beſotted with her arts, that he conſidered nothing elſe than forming ſchemes to pleaſe her. He likewiſe ſaid, though ſhe would admit him to a thouſand little familiarities on purpoſe to inflame him, yet ſhe would not grant him the intire poſſeſſion of her perſon till ſhe had made him ſign a paper, promiſing, if ever he ſhould be at liberty, to marry her; but that lately they had had many diſputes, which would have made him averſe to the fulfilling his engagements had he had an opportunity."

Now, my deareſt *Emma*, I think I may congratulate you on the proſpect of ſeeing the ignominy you have been loaded with intirely removed from you. I hope ſoon to ſee you reſtored to your former ſtation in life; and when that circumſtance is accompliſhed, I believe I muſt then lend an ear to my Swain, who begins to be importunate about finiſhing a certain buſineſs which has been long in hand. I wiſh, however, to ſtay till I ſee you tolerably happy. The knowledge that you are not ſo, will leſſen mine. Accept the tendereſt wiſhes from my Lord and our dear *Fanny*, for the perfect reſtoration of your health and felicity. Time, my Love, muſt be your *Paraclete*. Adieu.

LOUISA STRETTON.

LETTER LXI.

To Lady LOUISA STRETTON.

THE loſs of my fame, my dear *Louiſa*, ſat very heavy on my mind; it ſeemed as if it would tincture all my days with melancholy. But what is Fame? An empty bubble, which every breath, however mean, may blow away, and utterly deſtroy. My virtue was as pure, in the day of diſgrace, as at this moment, when I am juſtified to the world. All I loſt then was a ſhadow. But I have loſt more. Yes, *Louiſa*, I feel that loſs can never be repaired. Felicity! can I taſte Felicity? Alas! no. All proſpect of it lies buried deep, deep in the grave. I forgive my Lord, I wiſh him happy; but I will never again be an inmate of the houſe from whence I have been driven with infamy and ſcorn. No, let me remain here; I wiſh not again to mix in a world in which I have found no reſting place. I dedicate my ſoul to ſorrow, and this place ſuits its melancholy reſolves. Lady *Elizabeth* ſooths my griefs, ſhe indulges me in the "ſad luxury to vulgar minds unknown." I open not my lips for hours. She is very good, ſhe does not weary me with importunities; ſhe leaves me to myſelf. I contemplate on the various ills which

which have oppreſſed me even from my youth up; I ſee myſelf marked out as a butt to receive the arrows of affliction. I no longer repine; I ſit in ſilence, waiting for the conſummation of all things; but wonder not that I am determined againſt encountering afreſh a world filled with diſaſters and vanity.

Do not, however, my deareſt *Louiſa*, do not delay the completion of your happineſs. Let me, by intreating you to conſent to Lord *Stretton*'s felicity, in ſome meaſure repay to that generous man a little part of my debt to him. He has done all in his power to make me happy; he could not arreſt the hand of Death. It would be a ſtrange folly in you to protract the time of your union any longer; let me then hear, in your next, that at leaſt the time is fixed, if not over; and may that God, who can alone bleſs his creatures, make you both happy! May your lives be long and honourable! May you never know diſtreſs but by the name! and ſuffer not the remembrance of me to viſit you in the hour of feſtivity and triumph. Think me loſt and dead to the world; it is now my only wiſh. Gloomy Deſpair hangs heavy at my heart, and my ſhattered conſtitution apprizes me I ſhall ſoon ſee an end to my miſeries, for thoſe are mortal. Oh! that

that my predictions may be ſoon, very ſoon verified!

Adieu!

EMMA CLEVELAND.

LETTER LXXII.

To Lady CLEVELAND.

HAVE, then, the gloomy manſions of Deſpair entirely obliterated, in the breaſt of my *Emma*, all the fond names of Mother, Child, and Friend? Does ſhe not wiſh to be again united to her lovely Infant, whoſe loſs ſhe ſo pathetically lamented? Have the ſufferings of her venerable Mother, on her account, made her unſollicitous to wipe from her furrowed cheek the briny tear? And will ſhe ſhut her arms againſt her *Louiſa*, her *Fanny*, and her well-wiſher, *Stretton*, the much-loved Friend of her departed *Edward?* Is her heart grown callous to all feeling, her ears deaf to their united intreaties, and her eyes blind to their tears? Does ſhe prefer brooding over her misfortunes, deſolate, and alone, to the tender participation of Friends to whom ſhe is ſo dear? And is it my gentle *Emma* who is ſo inexorable? Surely not. Oh! my Friend, guard againſt the Demon of Deſpair! Heaven,

Heaven, offended at ſuch impiety, may yet withhold the bleſſings it may ſtill have in ſtore for you. Your Child demands your attention and protection; your Mother's infirm ſtate of health makes it probable that the dear little Infant will ſoon be left deſtitute. You know how happy I ſhould be to ſupply, as much as in my power, a Mother's care; but moſt likely your eldeſt Siſter, as being nearer related, may inſiſt on having the tuition of her. Is then your regard for the dead to contract your heart, and turn it againſt the welfare of your Child? Reflect, the dear Saint wiſhed to be aſſigned a perpetual guardianſhip over you. Would his gentle, his virtuous ſoul, receive pleaſure in your cloiſtering yourſelf in a ruinous Caſtle, with a woman weaned from the world by misfortunes, and delivering yourſelf up to mournful ſolitude, when there are ſuch calls on you to return to the world? Conſider, Lady *Elizabeth* was conſtrained to paſs the ſummer of her days in that ſequeſtred place; ſhe afterwards made it her reſidence from choice; but why? Old Age was coming on; ſhe ſtood ſingle and alone in the world; ſhe had no connections, no parental, no filial ties to fulfil or ſupply; retirement then was the wiſeſt, the only ſtep ſhe could take. Remember that true Virtue is active; a mere abſence from

from Vice is not ſufficient to attain praiſe or reward; you have ſocial duties to obſerve; then, for Heaven's ſake relinquiſh your ſcheme of retirement; beſtow proper reflection on it, and you will be induced to forego it.

Charity might whiſper another claim. You ſay you forgive Lord *Cleveland*, but you leave him reaſon to doubt the reality. Indeed he is very penitent; I ſhould ſuppoſe his Letter convinced you he was ſo; but in yours to him, Lord *Stretton* ſays, "Though you ſay you pardon, yet your reſolves plainly imply you do it by halves*." If you ever mean to ſhew the world and him you freely pardon him, you muſt do ſomething to ſhew the world and him you intend to be reconciled alſo; and I believe I may add, it will be neceſſary to do ſo ſpeedily, if at all. I don't know whether I am commiſſioned to ſay thus much, but his Lordſhip's health declines ſo faſt, that it is the opinion of every body he will not live many months. Should he die, you may hereafter blame yourſelf for not aſcertaining the world of the reality of your forgiveneſs, which you ſay is ſincere.

I have, my deareſt *Emma*, had the concurrence of your Mother and my Lord on

* Neither Lord *Cleveland*'s Letter, nor her Anſwer, appear.

the

the ſubject I have written on; my wiſhes are the ſame with theirs, that you would ſacrifice a little to Appearances. Lord *Stretton* ſays, more advantage may accrue to you than you at preſent can entertain the leaſt idea of.

Do not, my Love, continue inflexible. I will ſet you an example. I mean to obey your commands; and, as a proof, next *Tueſday* I give my hand to Lord *Stretton*. I will not accept your congratulations, unleſs I hear them from your own lips. Weigh well what I have written, and believe me, none can love you more than your

LOUISA STRETTON.

LETTER LXXIII.

To Lady STRETTON.

JOY! joy! to my deareſt *Louiſa!* Yes, though you ſay you will not receive my written congratulations, I will, I muſt re-repeat them. Oh! my Friend, how did your Letter wring my heart. Every line pierced it through and through. The ſame poſt brought me Letters from my dear Mother, and my Lord. What can I do? Muſt I relinquiſh my favourite ſcheme? I muſt. My Child! oh! could I abandon thee?

thee? forget my dear *Louiſa?* Blot from your memory my cruel reſolves againſt my Child; in my griefs I had forgot I was a Parent.

But let me be indulged in my mode of returning; let me have the happineſs of embracing both you and your Lord here; come and fetch me, and bring my amiable *Fanny*, if ſhe is with you; you cannot, you will not deny me this. Your preſence will give a ſanction to my initiation again into a world, from whence I was ſo lately driven with diſgrace.

I find both by my Mother's Letter, and from ſome hints in Lord *Cleveland*'s, that his health is really very indifferent; poor man! I hope he will uſe this time of probation to recollect himſelf properly; he has ever been too careleſs of himſelf in every particular.

My deareſt *Louiſa!* I muſt be indulged in my way of living when I return to *Cleveland Place*; I cannot conſent to be on the footing I have formerly been with his Lordſhip; but you and I will talk that over when we meet. It is a delicate point, but muſt be adjuſted to my ſatisfaction.

I have ſhed rivers of tears over your Letter. Indeed I never have been more diſtreſſed than I was on the examination of my own heart. I believe my misfortunes had impaired my underſtanding, but

I am

I am now reſigned to the will of Providence. I will no longer murmur; yet I ſtill carry the barbed ſhaft in my heart; it will remain for ever. My heart is the monument of my departed Friend, my Guardian Angel! Look down then, bleſſed Spirit, while I lift my eyes to thee, and ſwear ever to bear thy chaſte and conſtant love in ſtrict remembrance; never to ſuffer the world, into which I am per-force obliged to enter, to obliterate thy virtue or ſufferings one moment from my heart; but ever to live ſuch a life as may intitle me to hope to be united to thee in thoſe manſions of bliſs, where thou art now receiving the fulneſs of joy, in reward for thy ill fortune here, where neither ſighs, nor tears, nor lamentations are to be found; nor where inſidious enemies can deſtroy thy peace! Vouchſafe then to lead me through the devious paths of life till the Almighty inclines his mercy towards me, and graciouſly pleaſes to take me to himſelf!

Adieu! my *Louiſa!* my communion with my departed Friend has conveyed a gleam of comfort to my ſoul. May you be happy!

Yours ever,

EMMA CLEVELAND.

LET-

LETTER LXXIV.

To Lady STRETTON.

Cleveland Place.

AH! my dear *Louiſa*, I can never ſufficiently acknowledge my gratitude to you for forcing me from my retirement. I am convinced I ſhould ſoon have loſt every valuable ſentiment of the heart; what tranſports, ſuch as a Mother only can feel, did I experience when my Child, my *Harriot*, was preſented to me! The dear little creature ran to me with the utmoſt joy. I was almoſt overcome by the ſenſations which poſſeſſed me; and had not a flood of tears kindly relieved me, I believe I ſhould have fainted while I preſſed her to my boſom. I think her much improved by being in the country; the naſty town air had begun to rob her ſweet cheeks of their native bloom; I could not take my eyes from her; and then my Mother too; I wonder my ſpirits have ſupported themſelves through ſo many agitating conflicts; when will they ſubſide, and ſink into their original calm ſtate?

My Father ſeems to regard me with a tenderneſs I never obſerved in him, even in my moſt infant years; he wept very much as he preſſed me in his arms.

He

He ſaid, in a whiſper, as if he would not have me hear his involuntary ſelf-accuſation, "Good God! how could I devote this angelic creature to miſery? Oh! that I could recall time!" Think how I was affected with his apoſtrophe; yet I ſuppreſſed my emotions, leſt I ſhould give him more pain. Indeed I was unable to ſpeak. When the flutter, which at firſt ſeized me on the recognition of ſo many and ſo dear objects, had a little ſubſided, and it was in my power to give utterance to my feelings, I aſked where my Lord was. My Mother took my hand, "Can you, my Love, behold your Huſband without ſuch emotions as may induce him to think you have not forgiven him his cruel treatment of you?" I was preparing to anſwer her, when my Father prevented me, by ſaying to my Mother, "Mrs. *Woodville*, can you doubt our Daughter's forgiveneſs of her Huſband, when you have ſeen ſuch proofs of her ineſtimable goodneſs; has ſhe not freely forgiven me; me, who was the accurſed and firſt cauſe of all her ſufferings?"—"Ah! my dear Sir, (cried I, preſſing his hand to my lips,) let me intreat you not to ſay one word more on this affecting ſubject; I expected to have been welcomed home by Lord *Cleveland*; believe me, I feel not the leaſt reſentment againſt him for what has

happened; he was deceived; I ſhall deſerve the higheſt cenſure ſhould I have entered his doors without eraſing from my heart the remembrance of former injuries. No, unleſs I could have freely forgiven him, no power ſhould have brought me hither."

I doubt not, my deareſt Child, (ſaid my Mother,) but that your Lord is impatient to ſee you."—"Why is he not here then?"—"Alas! my Dear, he is very ill, much worſe than I cared to tell you. I hope your return, and the kindneſs which I am ſure you will ſhew him, may be ſalutary to him, and forward his recovery; he has not taken the leaſt care of himſelf; I fear his diſorder has intirely undermined his conſtitution." I knew my Mother's tenderneſs of heart, and therefore judged ſhe might, through the medium of her fears, have ſeen Lord *Cleveland*'s ſtate of health in the moſt alarming point of view; I delayed not, however, to go to his apartment inſtantly, my good Mother firſt apprizing him of my intention. My Father led me into his room; his appearance ſtruck me exceedingly; he was ſeated in an arm chair, but ſo pale, ſo lean, and ſqualid, that I believe, had I ſeen him by chance, I ſhould hardly have been able to call him to my remembrance. My Father preſented me to him, ſaying, "Here, my Lord, receive this Angel once more

more from my hand; oh! that you may be as ſenſible of her worth, and revere her for it as I do."—"I am, I am, (ſobbed Lord *Cleveland*,) I am ſenſible, truly ſenſible of her worth. Oh! ſupport me, that I may kneel and implore her forgiveneſs." He really eſſayed to get off the ſeat; I prevented him, though I could hardly ſpeak for weeping. "I have already forgot every diſagreeable circumſtance, (ſaid I,) do not then ſuffer the remembrance to retard your recovery." He could not utter a word, but held out his arms, as if he wiſhed to embrace me; his penitence, his tears, his almoſt dying looks, and the natural effect which an object in diſtreſs has on my heart, all united, were too ſtrong to be reſiſted; I threw my arms round his neck, "Oh! my Lord! my Huſband! (cried I in an agony)—I cannot ſupport this!—Do not thus wound my ſoul!"—"Am I forgiven? and is not my ſight hateful to you?" It was with much difficulty he could utter theſe broken ſentences. I kiſſed his cheek, which was wet with the tears of both, and again begged him to believe me as to the firſt, and my care and attendance on him ſhould aſſure him he did me injuſtice in harbouring a ſuſpicion of the laſt. I ſat by him for more than two hours—I ſeveral times took his hand in mine, and gave him many

little things which I thought would be of ſervice to him. He received them as inſtances of my affectionate attention of him, and frequently would break out in theſe expreſſions: "How have I been blinded! What a Wretch have I been! Oh! that life may be lent me to repay your goodneſs. How is it poſſible ever to reward you?" I uſed my endeavours to ſilence him, but the more I aſſiduouſly ſtrove to ſuppreſs the effuſions of his gratitude, the more he was inclined to make acknowledgments. My Mother told me, he had had very little reſt for ſome time, therefore I begged him to lay down and try to get ſome ſleep; I even told him, I would ſit by him. He ſaid, he would be guided by me in every thing; but if I ſtaid by him, he could never cloſe his eyes, as their only buſineſs now was to look on me, while yet the ſenſe of ſeeing remained. He conſented to reſt on the bed; I aſſiſted the Nurſe in covering him. He preſſed my hand to his lips, and thanked me, in the moſt tender manner, for my care. I then retired to my own room. The many conflicting paſſions which had at once ſeized me, joined to the efforts I was obliged to make to bear me up with the appearance of tolerable fortitude, all combining, ruſhed together on my recollection. I threw myſelf into a chair, and for a long

time

time gave myſelf up to a violence I could not ſuppreſs. The floods of tears I ſhed, in ſome meaſure diſpelled the weight that before had preſſed down my heart; I felt myſelf relieved.

My Lord will, I hope, be a new creature in every ſenſe of the word; ſickneſs makes more reformations than the Preacher. If he ſtill continues to uſe me kindly I will look forward, and not truſt myſelf with looking back. The retroſpect would cauſe too great an anguiſh, and again tear open the wounds, which time and the ſtrongeſt efforts only can heal.

Preſent my tendereſt love to my *Fanny*; give your Lord my aſſurances of laſting eſteem; and tell yourſelf none can love you better than

EMMA CLEVELAND."

P. S. Tell *Fanny* I am impatient to have her with me.

LETTER LXXV.

To Lady STRETTON.

My dear Lady STRETTON,

YOU muſt accept me for a Correſpondent, in the room of my Siſter, for the preſent. My Lord is now ſo ill, that all

hopes of his recovery are entirely over. I doubt my dear *Emma* reflects on herſelf for not at firſt complying with our united intreaties in returning hither ſooner; for ſomebody has, with more officiouſneſs than prudence, told her that he drank, during that fortnight, ſuch an immenſe quantity of brandy, as certainly has burnt up and deſtroyed the principles of life. But it is needleſs to torment herſelf; he always drank a great deal; and that wicked wretch, Mrs. *Hotham*, uſed to encourage him, as I ſuppoſe ſhe could eaſier effect any purpoſe ſhe had in view when he was inebriated.

He yeſterday made his Will, and ſettled all his affairs entirely. Certainly he has made all the reparation now in his power for his former ill treatment of my Siſter, and if money could purchaſe felicity, ſhe would ſtand a fair chance of being as happy as I wiſh her. Riches, indeed, may put it in the power of the poſſeſſor to make others happy. One may, with Wealth,

"Spread Content and Chearfulneſs around,
And banquet on the Bleſſings of the Poor:"

And this god-like power muſt convey a ſtore of bliſs to a benevolent mind.

When my Lord had finiſhed with the Lawyers, he begged to ſee my Siſter. — "My deareſt *Emma*, (ſaid he, in a feeble voice,)

voice,) I feel within myſelf that I ſhall not long be a burthen to the earth. Take theſe Papers; you will find I have done all that remained in my power to reward you. Would to Heaven that Death had not ſnatched from you all probability of your being happy with one whoſe merit deſerved a better fate than that he met with! My own death would have then given me pleaſure in its near approach, as my diſſolution would have removed the only impediment to an union of perſons, where the hearts had been ſo long united. But ſhould you hereafter ſee any one who you think can inſure your felicity, you will, by the ample fortune I leave you, have it in your power to conſult your own choice, and be happy in your own way. Would to Heaven that natural privilege had never been violated!" You muſt ſuppoſe this ſpeech, delivered too not without great emotion, by a man viſibly on his death-bed, would affect every one. My poor Siſter, I thought ſhe would have fainted; it brought back to her aching memory the whole ſource of her former misfortunes. She claſped her hands together, and exhibited a picture of the deepeſt diſtreſs. By the interpoſition of Lady *Cleveland*, my Lord has been induced to leave ſome part of the eſtate to go with the title. My Siſter ſaid, it muſt be ſo, to ſave Sir

Charles Beville's credit, for he had promiſed Mr. *Cleveland* that he ſhould not be a ſufferer. Worthleſs man as he is, I think he ſhould be obliged to fulfill his infamous engagements with his Collegue. Can we find a more adequate puniſhment than a marriage between thoſe two wretches, like *Sampſon*'s young foxes, united by fire-brands? *Emma* could not, however, prevail for more than two thouſand a-year. He is ſo extravagant a wretch, that he will ſtarve on this pittance, as he muſt ſupport the dignity of his title; however, ſhould he behave well, my Siſter will have it in her power to augment his fortune. Little *Harriet* has twenty thouſand pounds, and my Siſter has more than eight thouſand a-year, three of which ſhe may give away for ever.

I ſuppoſe, by this time, your gueſt from *Ireland* is arrived. I do not believe one word you have told me concerning him, therefore do not attempt at deceiving me, for you will never ſucceed; but remember I have not an invincible diſlike to him, only that I am certain he has never thought of me in the manner you have declared, and I have ſome little dear-bought experience to ſecure me from again falling into the ſnare of ſelf-deluſion.

Tueſday

Tueſday Noon.

"BEFORE this reaches you, I believe Lord *Cleveland* will be no more. He has not ſpoke ſince morning, and my Mama ſays ſhe does not think him ſenſible. My poor Siſter ſeems a Statue of Woe. Indeed I wonder theſe repeated trials are not too much for her. I feel a great ſorrow on this poor man's account. He ſeems ſo truly penitent and ſenſible of his unworthy neglect of my Siſter, that I really believe, had he lived, he would have been, in future, an affectionate Huſband. I hope his good intentions will ſeal his pardon in the next world."

Wedneſday.

"MY dear Lady *Stretton*, it is all over. Lord *Cleveland* breathed his laſt, while reſting on my Siſter's arm, this morning, about ſix o'clock. God receive him! Death is a terrible thing; it is a circumſtance I have been unuſed to. The houſe is dreadful; every thing ſo quiet and ſilent as death itſelf. The Servants creep about, as if their poor Maſter would be diſturbed by their foot-ſteps.

"I have been in my Siſter's room, but ſhe waved her hand to me; ſhe chuſes to be alone. I will not break in upon her ſorrows. Adieu, my deareſt Lady *Stretton*; remember me to your Lord. If you can,

for Heaven's ſake pay us a viſit in this Houſe of Mourning. Your company will be neceſſary to all, more particularly to your

FRANCES WOODVILLE.

LETTER LXXVI.

To Lady STRETTON.

NOW I have again loſt you, my dear *Louiſa*, I ſhall feel melancholy, but will ſtrive againſt it; for if we cannot intirely conquer corroding Care, yet we may keep it within ſome bounds.

Notwithſtanding what Lord *Stretton* ſays, I am morally certain I ſhall never again enter into engagements. There are many (indeed I ſuppoſe every Widow in the firſt three months of her Widowhood would declare as much, if only for the ſake of decency) who make ſtrong reſolutions never to marry again, and may have been induced to forego their reſolves; but I am totally out of the queſtion; my Marriage, from the commencement, has been a conſtant ſource of woe; begun, continued, and ended in tears. Lord *Stretton* may laugh as much as he pleaſes at the determinations of a Widow of three and twenty, while in her weeds, who

who determines never to alter her widowed ſtate; but when a retroſpective eye is caſt on the momentous tranſactions that have occurred to me, he muſt not rank me with the claſs of common Widows. I am ſure he meant to make me ſmile. He wiſhed to ſee me chearful—To wipe from my remembrance the griefs I have endured.

And, Oh! how precious is that timely Friend,
Who checks Affliction in her dread career!
Who knows diſtreſs, well knows that he may lend
One hour of life, who ſtops the riſing tear.

My obligations then to your Lord are very great; he has been my *Paraclete*. How often has he dwelt on the praiſes of our Friend.—He talks of him as if abſent, not dead, only as gone a journey, whither I ſhall ſoon follow.

I could not help ſmiling when your Lord ſaid, I ſhould forget my Vows of Celibacy when I ſhould ſee his Friend from *Ireland*. Pray is Sir *Charles* very handſome? I wiſh to know, on *Fanny*'s account. I aſked her the other day; ſhe proteſted ſhe could not tell. She thought him agreeable, but that ſhe had been ſo cautious ſince her firſt trip, that ſhe hardly allowed herſelf to look at a man. As he is ſo great a favourite of Lord *Stretton*'s, I ſhould not be ſorry if your conjectures are true; and I think if he

poſſeſſed all the qualities of an Angel, *Fanny* would deſerve him. He ſhall not receive her without a fortune—I have taken care of her; but that is at preſent a ſecret between ourſelves; ſhe has not the leaſt ſuſpicion.

Adieu! remember me always.

EMMA CLEVELAND."

[*The ſituation of things remaining the ſame, a ſeries of Letters is omitted. It appears by the following, that a Marriage took place between Sir* Charles Beville *and Miſs* Woodville.]

LETTER LXXVII.

To Lady BEVILLE.

My deareſt FANNY,

Cleveland-Place.

I Suppoſe I ſhall make you vain, but I exceedingly regret your abſence. You may believe your Siſter is not more pleaſed at it than myſelf; but as you are married, you know you muſt follow your *Caro Spoſo*; and Lady *Cleveland* is rooted to this place; ſhe cannot bear the thoughts of quitting it, and it would be cruel to leave her quite alone. She frequently ſteals away from us

to

to that ſolitary walk, which ſhe ſo often traverſed while you was here: It is there ſhe collects her whole ſoul, and dedicates it to her departed *Courtenay*. Do you know, I think my Lord very wrong for indulging her viſionary ſchemes: He may talk what he will of ſoothing, but I do ſay her malady ought not to be fed and nouriſhed. She ſaid the other day, ſhe ſaw him every hour, his image was continually floating before her eyes. I ſtrive to laugh her out of theſe whims, but my Lord treats it as a ſerious affair.

I wiſh you would finiſh your excurſion and return hither, you and Sir *Charles* would ſtrengthen my party—I am nothing againſt my Huſband and *Emma*. I hope, however, in a few years, Lady *Cleveland* will think it neceſſary, for the ſake of her Daughter, to mix a little in the world; at preſent ſhe is as much a recluſe as if ſhe lived, or was rather buried in *Bellman's-Caſtle*. But it is only from the gay world ſhe ſecludes herſelf; all who have any claim to diſtreſs find her acceſſible.

Give all our loves to *Caro Carlino*, and accept the ſame yourſelf from all in the name of

LOUISA STRETTON.

LET-

LETTER LXXVIII.

To Lady BEVILLE.

PREPARE to hear the moſt miraculous and unexpected piece of news that ever reached your ear; and yet it may be fatal. Oh! Heaven avert the realizing of my fears! I know not how to begin, or, when I have begun, how I ſhall be able to proceed with any degree of method.

This morning my Lord had taken a ride — I was reading, and your Siſter was in her favourite walk, indulging her favourite cogitations. All on a ſudden I was alarmed by an outcry of one of the female Servants; I haſtily ran to know what was the matter; the firſt idea ſuggeſting ſome accident to the Child. An object, that ſhocked me exceedingly, preſented itſelf — It was your Siſter, inſenſible, in the arms of two of the Men Servants. Terrified at her ſituation, I inſtantly demanded the cauſe? *James Ward*, who was one of them, ſaid, "He ſaw his Lady laying on the ground in a fainting fit; that he flew to her aſſiſtance, and made what haſte he could with her into the houſe to procure ſome remedies." In a little time we recovered her, and got her up ſtairs to bed; but before ſhe could relate the cauſe of her fainting, another fit ſucceed-

ſucceeded. I cannot expreſs to you the anxiety I was under—My Lord abſent, and my dear and beloved Friend in this deplorable ſtate. When ſhe could ſpeak, ſhe begged to be left alone with me. "Oh, *Louiſa!* (ſhe exclaimed, claſping her hands,) I have ſeen him! I have ſeen him!"—"Whom have you ſeen, my *Emma?*"—"I have ſeen my dear lamented *Courtenay.* He has viſited me to warn me hence—I ſhall die, and then I ſhall be united to him."—"You muſt not, my Love, (cried I,) give yourſelf up to ſolitude; your melancholy ſteals upon you more and more every day, and you think of him till you abſolutely, through the warmth of your imagination, fancy you have his image before your."

"Ah! *Louiſa*, this was not imagination, his apparition really appeared to me—If I ever ſaw him I this day beheld him—Was it only the illuſion of my brain? Why have I not fancied ſo before? I was not more melancholy to day than uſual—No, no, it was not an illuſion." I really began to terrify myſelf with apprehenſions of her head being hurt, but ſhe ſpoke very reaſonably. I aſked her the particulars; ſhe deſcribed him accurately; ſhe ſaid, ſhe was ſitting in rather a thoughtful mood, but far from gloomineſs; ſhe was looking between

tween the trees, and ſaw him paſs through the walk at the end of the lawn; that he turned his eyes towards her, but ſeemed not to take notice of her; whether he inſtantly vaniſhed ſhe knew not, for her eye-ſight forſook her, and ſhe entirely loſt her ſenſes, nor knew where ſhe was, till ſhe found herſelf with me in the ſaloon. She ſtill perſiſted in the ſame ſtory. What to think I could not tell; I could not ſuppoſe that God would really permit him again to viſit the earth; yet it was more likely ſhe ſhould have imagined ſhe ſaw him in the meridian of her grief, than now, when it ſeemed to ſubſide. The more I gave it reflection the more I was perplexed. I wiſhed impatiently for the return of my Lord.

I endeavoured to re-compoſe her mind, but my utmoſt efforts loſt their effect. She continued to repeat, "I ſhall ſoon leave you; his bleſt ſpirit has beckoned me away."—Her pulſe grew quick, and I thought I perceived indications of a fever coming on. I have heard the power the imagination has over the body, which increaſed my fears, leſt ſhe ſhould fall a victim to her's. At laſt wearied Nature gave way, and ſhe ſunk into ſlumbers, but infinitely diſturbed, ſometimes ſtarting, and uttering cries in her ſleep.

My

My Lord returned juſt before dinner. He had heard of Lady *Cleveland*'s fainting: "My dear *Louiſa*, (ſaid he,) what is the cauſe of this diſorder in our Friend?"—"The moſt ſtrange event in the world, (ſaid I;) the poor unhappy Creature has taken it into her mind that the ſhade of *Courtenay* has appeared to her — Indeed, my Lord, you have been inſtrumental in indulging her melancholy and viſionary ideas — Certainly it can only be ſome one that bore a reſemblance to him; but it is dreadful to ſee what an effect it has had on her imagination; ſhe is extremely ill, having fainted ſeveral times. She ſays, his appearance is to warn her from the world. I have ſaid all I could to convince her it was ſome perſon whoſe exterior, being ſomething like him, an heated imagination has formed the reſt." Judge how I was ſurprized to hear Lord *Stretton* ſay, "I own I am of opinion ſhe has really ſeen him."—"Good God! (ſaid I,) you do not believe in theſe ſuper-natural appearances, ſurely—What purpoſe can they anſwer?"—"Believe me, my dear Creature, Lady *Cleveland* has really and truly beheld *Edward Courtenay*. I doubt not you will be greatly amazed to hear me aver ſuch a thing; but I have all along concealed a ſecret from you, which I find I am now at liberty to divulge:

divulge: Know then, my Love, that *Courtenay* is living." — "Living! (I exclaimed,) why was this circumſtance kept a ſecret?" — "For reaſons very obvious; the account of his death, and particularly falling a ſacrifice to calumny, opened and prepared the heart of Lord *Cleveland* for conviction, which the other teſtimony alone could not have effected. I ought to demand your pardon for making this concealment from you; but I knew your tenderneſs for the dear *Emma* would never have permitted you to ſee her tears falling for his death, without making a diſcovery that might prove fatal — I could not foreſee the approaching end of Lord *Cleveland.*"

"Oh! my Lord, (ſaid I, ſighing,) I much fear the diſcovery ſtill will prove fatal. You ſhould, indeed you ſhould have been more circumſpect, and not have ſuffered her to have ſeen him in ſuch a manner."

"That has been the conſequence of an accident; however, I hope ſhe will ſoon recover, when ſhe finds the man ſhe has ſo long lamented is ſtill living, and that every bar to their happineſs is removed. I received a Letter from him the other day, wherein he tells me, he thinks he has ſacrificed ſufficiently to punctilio, as a year has elapſed in widowhood; that he is impatient

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to be permitted to repay the moſt lovely and amiable of women, for the many tears ſhe has ſhed on his account. I expected him here this evening, and not ſooner, and meant to take the opportunity, after dinner, of breaking the whole affair to her. He has reſided in *Ireland* under a feigned name and character, on Sir *Charles Beville*'s eſtate.

"We muſt, as ſoon as poſſible, ſaid I, endeavour to break this extraordinary event to her, leſt her diſorder ſhould gain an alarming height; and yet I fear the effects of ſuch an intereſting diſcovery on her weak frame of body. Oh! what a misfortune, that he ſhould have ſtrayed this way!"

"It is, indeed, ſaid my Lord; but I imagine his extreme impatience made him reach this place ſome hours before he expected. I had promiſed to meet him at the Bowling-green Houſe at *L*—, and then conduct him hither. Not finding me there, he ſtrolled towards a place which contained all he ever loved. You know this place is quite ſtrange to him, therefore he might not ſuppoſe he was ſo near obſervation, or his tenderneſs for Lady *Cleveland*'s welfare would have prevented him. But I will ſet off immediately to the ſeat of *rendezvous*, and do you, my dear Creature, do all in your power to compoſe *Emma*'s ſpirits, and ſuffer her to give way to the moſt flattering hopes.

Without

Without ſtaying to eat his dinner he ſat off. You may believe I had no appetite, ſo I left the ſervice on the table, and went up to your Siſter. She ſtarted on my coming into the room, and awaked. She looked wildly about. I took her hand in mine, and found it burning hot. I ſpoke to her, and for ſome time ſhe made me no anſwer. On my repeating my queſtions, I found, to my utter grief, by the incoherence of her expreſſions, that ſhe was delirious. Good God! how infinitely I was ſhocked! She called on *Courtenay* ſeveral times, and then would ſhriek as if ſhe ſaw him. By this time Mr. *Benſon* came. Happy was I to ſee him! He bled her, and ordered a bliſter to her back, and gave her ſome compoſing draughts. Theſe remedies, I flatter myſelf, will prove ſalutary, if they ſhould not be effectual. But I will not anticipate an event which would for ever make me miſerable; indeed, which I hardly think I could ſupport.

I have ſeen *Courtenay*. Heavens! what a flutter I experienced! It was really like a reſurrection, to find him living, after ſo long mourning his death. The joy we ſhould have taſted, met with an allay, from the ſituation of our dear *Emma*. Poor *Courtenay* is curſing his ſtars, and ſeverely blaming himſelf; but, as he ſays, he had no idea that he ſhould be ſeen; likewiſe he imagined

gined the important diſcovery had already been made to Lady *Cleveland*. Lord *Stretton* obſerved, that he was fearful of diſcloſing ſo important a piece of intelligence, till he was certain as to the preciſe time of Mr. *Courtenay*'s arrival, as he judged Lady *Cleveland* would have been ſo anxious, and likewiſe apprehenſive. "Oh! my dear *Stretton!*" (ſaid *Courtenay*,) I have a thouſand obligations to you; I am convinced you acted for the beſt; Heaven reſtore my *Emma* ſpeedily, for I find I am leſs able to bear diſappointment than ever. Misfortune has rather ſoftened my heart, than rendered it callous to diſtreſs."

Thank God, this evening our beloved *Emma* ſeems inclined to reſt; her mind is more compoſed; if ſhe continues as well to-morrow, we ſhall begin to hint her happineſs to her. I have left her in a fine doze. Oh! merciful Heaven, grant her to our prayers! How many hearts would break, ſhould ſhe do otherwiſe than well! I ſhall ſend off this Letter early to-morrow, and will continue to write often, if but one line, juſt to tell you how we go on.

Would to God it was all over! I ſhall dread the breaking it to her. I do not know, in her weak ſtate, who we can get to do it. Adieu! Yours ſincerely,

LOUISA STRETTON.

LETTER LXXIX.

To Lady BEVILLE.

I Have been ſo extremely hurried all this day, that I have not been able to perform my promiſe ſo punctually as I wiſhed to have done. The important diſcovery is made; but whether the conſequences will be happy or unfortunate, I am yet doubtful. At preſent we have much to fear; every thing throughout the whole of this affair has been managed badly; it is to little purpoſe to lay the miſcarriage on this or that perſon, there ſeems a fatality attending every circumſtance relative to your poor Siſter; whoever undertakes any thing for her advantage, though they labour with the utmoſt celerity in her cauſe, ſome envious Demon overturns and fruſtrates all their ſchemes, or by ſubverting their intention, produces misfortune where they ſtrove for happineſs.

This morning Mr. *Moreton* came hither; as I knew the regard your Siſter had for him, and likewiſe conſidering his calling in life, and the ſanctity of his character, I thought him a proper perſon to ſtrengthen the dear creature's mind, and, by degrees, inform her of the great event; both Lord *Stretton* and Mr. *Courtenay* coincided with my opinion. *Courtenay* was rather apprehenſive

henſive that her illneſs had yet left her too weak to hazard the perturbation ſuch a diſcovery would occaſion; but I told him, "I thought it abſolutely neceſſary to give her the important information, as ſhe ſeemed ſo confident in herſelf, that ſhe ſhould die very ſoon; for when I ſpoke to her this morning, ſhe ſaid, in a low voice, "I am yet living, my dear *Louiſa*, but nevertheleſs, I feel within myſelf that the principles of life are decaying; I have received many repeated attacks, but yeſterday the final blow was ſtruck. Why ſhould the Almighty allow the ſhade of that departed Saint again to viſit theſe paths of Deſolation but to inform me I ſhould ſoon be reſtored to him?" I was at that time prevented ſaying any thing to her, as her Nurſe came into the room, only thus far, "Do not deſpair, my deareſt *Emma*, Heaven will, in its own time, reveal every thing to you; but, for God's ſake, endeavour to rouze yourſelf; do but recover, and you yet may be happier than you at preſent can form the leaſt idea of." She anſwered only by ſhaking her head, and heaving a ſigh.

My arguments had weight with Mr. *Courtenay*, and he then became altogether impatient to have the opportunity of preſenting himſelf before his beloved *Emma*. We delayed not to give Mr. *Moreton* a ſummary account

account of things, to enable him to make the ſo much wiſhed yet dreaded explanation.

There was a large ſcreen in Lady *Cleveland*'s room, behind which, while ſhe was ſleeping, Lord *Stretton* and Mr. *Courtenay* ſeated themſelves, as the latter was deſirous of not loſing a minute when his *Emma* was told he was yet living, and more attached to her than ever. I took my uſual poſt by the bed ſide. Soon ſhe opened her eyes, and, I thought, ſpoke with more ſtrength than before. Think what were *Edward*'s emotions on finding himſelf ſo near the object of his tenderneſs, his hopes, and fears! to hear the accents of her tongue, and yet to be reſtrained from falling at her feet, and pouring forth his faithful heart before her!

I told her, in a whiſper, that Mr. *Moreton* had called; that as I knew he was a Favourite of hers, I had, in part, informed him of the cauſe of her preſent diſorder, judging it might be in his power to diſſipate the gloomy ideas which had ſeized her, and likewiſe to raiſe her ſpirits to happier expectations. "Ah! then, (ſaid ſhe,) you ſtill think this event ſome illuſion of the brain. Why may I not indulge myſelf with the hope that I am not intirely deſerted by Heaven?—that it has, in its mercy, bleſt me with a foretaſte of happineſs."

"But

"But conſider your ſituation, my deareſt Creature: Would you wiſh to die and leave your *Harriet* to a ſtranger's care?"

"Oh! my dear *Louiſa!* what advantage will the life of ſuch a wretch be to my Child? You ſee how I am debilitated and ſhattered. I will not leave my precious Infant to the hands of ſtrangers—I conſign her to your protection and Lord *Stretton*'s. So tenderly as you have loved her unfortunate Mother, can I object to leaving her under ſuch care? She, dear, lovely, and tenderly beloved Child, will reap the benefit. I am rendered, by a continued courſe of afflictions, unfit for the offices of life. I never, no, never, can mix in a world from whence I have ever received mortifications. She will ſoon diſcover my weakneſſes, and perhaps I may loſe my conſequence with her. You will teach her to revere the memory of her truly diſtreſſed Parent."

Her ſpeech moved me ſo much, as to give me reaſon to believe poor *Courtenay* muſt be greatly affected; I therefore interrupted her, by begging leave to introduce Mr. *Moreton*. She acquieſced to my propoſal. She expreſſed a great ſatisfaction in ſeeing her old pious Friend. "I am glad to ſee you, Sir, (ſaid ſhe, holding out her hand.) You find me a poor weak creature,

but relying on the hope of being ſoon releaſed from all my troubles."—"I hope you will, my dear Lady, (he ſaid,) I ſincerely hope you will, but not at preſent in the manner you intimate; there are in ſtore for you many happy days on this ſide Heaven, which you muſt endeavour, by recovering your health as faſt as poſſible, to enjoy with thankfulneſs."

"No, Mr. *Moreton*, no; I feel I ſhall not live long, and that aſſurance gives me comfort. I ſuppoſe you have heard that I have been indulged with the view of a dear departed Friend, whoſe death I have long deplored?"—"Yes, Madam, I have been told ſo, but I do not believe it."—"How, Sir, not believe my aſſertion!"—"I do not believe in ſupernatural appearances. You may, and certainly have, taken an unfortunate idea into your mind; but I can give you very ſubſtantial proofs why it is impoſſible. Conſider, my dear Lady, of what conſequence can ſuch Beings as we are be to the Almighty? Can he not, if he pleaſes, reſume a worm of his own creating, without breaking up the manſions of the dead to give us warning? And why ſhould he for a moment interrupt the happineſs of a bleſſed Spirit, to oblige him again to viſit the ſcene of his former miſery? Would it not be unmerciful, even unjuſt, and contrary

trary to our notions of an Almighty God? I am, in my own mind, convinced, that it is not in the Will of God, or in the Power of the Devil, to permit the appearance of the Dead. We have indeed in the Bible an inſtance, but perhaps it was neceſſary, in the early times of revealed Religion, to admit of Miracles, to give ſtrength to the weak faith of its Profeſſors, and when the fate of great part of the world depended on it."

I was vexed with Mr. *Moreton*. What ſignified theſe orthodox opinions. He ſeemed to have forgot the ſubject he came upon. I ſaid, "Here are more ſubſtantial reaſons againſt harbouring ſuch ideas. Lady *Cleveland* will ſoon be convinced that ſhe has entertained a wrong opinion." I ſat in ſuch a manner, that I could ſee *Courtenay*; his eyes were fixed on me. I gave him a nod, with a look, ſignifying that I meant a hint to Mr. *Moreton*. He unfortunately miſtook my intention, and thought I wanted to ſpeak to him; he therefore came a little forward, which gave Lady *Cleveland* a faint view of him. This neither he nor I had the leaſt idea of, till we heard her utter a violent exclamation—"Ah! ſee, ſee! there he is! there he is! and inſtantly fell back in her bed in a fit. Good God! I cannot deſcribe either my own or *Courtenay*'s agony

on this unfortunate iſſue to our flattering hopes. She recovered but to fall into another. They continued ſucceſſively for more than three hours, during which time our poor *Courtenay* was in a ſtate of diſtraction. Theſe paroxyſms reduced her to the moſt deplorable ſtate of weakneſs you can imagine; ſhe lay without motion for ſeveral hours, ſeemingly unable to vent a groan or even a ſigh.

This evening, after having taken ſome compoſing and cordial draughts, ſhe ſeemed a little reſtored. When I thought ſhe could bear a little converſation, I knelt by her bedſide, and taking her hand in mine I told her, "I could not ſupport the ſight of her diſtreſs, and not take every imaginable means of preventing it: That I had a very important diſcovery to make; and fearful as I was of the conſequences her extraordinary emotions might excite, yet I was reſolved to hazard every thing, rather than ſhe ſhould ſtill remain a prey to melancholy."

"What, my *Louiſa*, does this preface portend? Surely I am prepared for every thing."

"Will you promiſe me, my Love, to expect a moſt wonderful diſcovery, and to ſupport it with firmneſs? You have been deceived, as to the moſt afflicting circumſtance

ſtance you ever experienced—I myſelf was a ſtranger till yeſterday to what I am going to unfold. You thought you ſaw the Shade of *Courtenay* — Ah! my beloved *Emma*, that Shade was himſelf; for political motives Lord *Stretton* reported his death."

"Almighty God! (ſhe exclaimed, claſping her hands together, and lifting up her eyes,) what do I hear? Is he living? Oh! no, no, it cannot be; do not cheat me; would he have left me thus long a prey to affliction and ſorrow? Oh! *Louiſa!* you think my diſtreſs and illneſs have weakened my head; I am not mad, indeed I am not; do not therefore attempt to deceive me; too ſenſibly do I feel my misfortunes: Ah! ſpare me the mortification of thinking my Friend ſeeks to deceive me."

Dear Creature, while ſhe ſpoke, the tears ran in torrents down her cheeks. I threw my arms round her neck, while my eyes flowed with tenderneſs. "My deareſt, beſt-beloved *Emma*, (ſaid I,) do not harbour an idea injurious to my friendſhip. Think not I would deceive you. No, not for worlds. I ſpeak nothing but the truth, which nothing but your want of ſtrength prevents from being clearly proved to you. Your *Courtenay* lives, and is in the houſe at this moment. He had particular reaſons for concealing himſelf, all which, at a pro-

per time, ſhall be explained to you. You ſhall, if you pleaſe, ſee him this moment."

"That he lives, (cried ſhe,) merciful Heaven receive my ſincereſt thanks! He, too, will be a Friend to my Child. Oh! *Louiſa!* but it is too late—I die, my Friend, but I die with leſs regret. He, the man I ever loved, may yet be happy in this life."

"You muſt live, my Dear, to conſtitute his happineſs, otherwiſe he had better indeed be dead; but you muſt now endeavour with all your ſtrength to recover."

"Ah! *Louiſa!* I feel it will not be; but if he lives, Oh! let my eyes be bleſſed with his ſight before they cloſe in endleſs night; let them take a long and laſt farewell of all they ever eſteemed and loved."

I entreated her to compoſe herſelf, and ſtrive to get a little ſleep, as I thought reſt entirely neceſſary to enable her to ſupport the tender interview. As ſoon as I was aſſured ſhe could bear his ſight, I would lead him to her; but at preſent I doubted whether his preſence might not rather retard than forward a recovery ſo much wiſhed for by us all.

"Then it is as I thought, cruel *Louiſa!* (cried ſhe, burſting into a freſh flood of tears;) but do not think to cheat me into life. No, the means you take, hurry on the

the few moments of exiſtence." She then turned from me and ſobbed audibly.

I could not ſupport the anguiſh I ſaw her undergo; I therefore begged her to believe I ſpoke the truth when I aſſured her of *Courtenay*'s exiſtence; that if ſhe would endeavour to compoſe her mind, I would inſtantly bring him to her. "If you do really and indeed ſpeak truth, (ſaid ſhe,) delay not any longer preſenting that long-lamented and unfortunate man to me; I make no doubt, that that God, who has ſupported me through a ſea of troubles, will enable me to bear this interview." I left her, and ſought the Gentlemen. When I related to them my converſation with Lady *Cleveland*, I aſked if they thought her ſufficiently prepared? Mr. *Courtenay* was ſo eager to ſee her, that he intreated me to conduct him in that moment. I begged my Lord might enter the room firſt. He did ſo; we were cloſe behind him. "Permit me to congratulate my dear Lady *Cleveland*, (ſaid he;) here is a perſon who will forward your recovery; ſhall he come in?" The extreme agitation of her mind prevented her ſpeech. *Courtenay* made but one ſtep from the door to the bedſide. "Oh! my *Emma!* (cried he,) do we then meet again?" He threw his arms round her waiſt. "It is, it is my *Courtenay!*" ſhe ex-

claimed; a dying paleneſs ſucceeded to a faint bluſh which had overſpread her cheeks on his entrance, her eyes cloſed, and ſhe ſunk ſenſeleſs into his arms. "Ah! wretch that I am, (he cried,) my precipitancy has undone my *Emma!* Oh! look up, my Angel! turn thy lovely eyes on thy adoring *Courtenay*; he dies, my *Emma*, unleſs he ſees thee ſpeedily recover." We haſtily applied proper remedies, while *Courtenay*, with a face as pale as her own, hung over her, his hands claſped together. In a little time ſhe revived, though it was near half an hour before ſhe became ſenſible that he was really living. I cannot repeat to you, my dear *Fanny*, a tenth part of their converſation, chiefly made up of broken ſentences and tender enquiries. I was the firſt to propoſe a ſeparation, as I was exceſſively apprehenſive that the hurry and fatigue would be too much for the weakened frame of *Emma*. *Courtenay* at laſt prevailed on himſelf to bid his beloved Lady *Cleveland* adieu. I was too ſoon ſenſible how neceſſary ſuch a ſtep was, for her fever increaſed very much, her delirium returned, and my fears and apprehenſions grew to an alarming height; yet I ſuppreſſed them, in order to conceal from Mr. *Courtenay* the ill-conſequences

of

of his appearance. She is at this preſent hour in a doze; but ſleep, ſo diſturbed, is not likely to refreſh her, or reſtore her ſtrength.

I pray to Heaven every hour for her ſpeedy recovery; yet ſometimes I feel my ſpirits ſo deeply depreſſed, that I cannot repel the moſt gloomy ideas. I think ſhe muſt be already worn out with repeated misfortunes. When we take a retroſpect of all ſhe has endured, we muſt be utterly aſhoniſhed, that the human frame, *ſo fearfully and ſo wonderfully made*, ſhould have had ſtrength to bear up againſt theſe *ſlings and arrows of outrageous fortune*. As the dear Creature ſays, may the God who afflicted her ſupport her in this proſpect of felicity! In that hope I will conclude.

I am, my dear *Fanny*,

For ever, your faithful

LOUISA STRETTON.

LETTER LXXX.

To Lady BEVILLE.

Saturday.

ALAS! my Dear, how fleeting and unſtable are our proſpects of happineſs in this world, while how certain and how permanent are our diſappointments! Our dear *Emma* has been, for theſe three days, in the moſt imminent danger. I can hardly expreſs to you my own feelings on this diſtreſsful occaſion, much leſs give you an idea of poor *Courtenay*'s ſituation; he wiſhes he had never diſcovered himſelf. We all wiſh, but there is a fatality attends our endeavours; every thing turns out contrary to our wiſhes. I know not what to think. Sometimes I am willing to indulge hopes, then again I am reduced to deſpair. As I have ſaid before, her conſtitution has been torn to pieces by ſo many repeated ſtrokes of Adverſity, and naturally delicate, that my fears increaſe every hour. I can hardly bear to be alone; my anxiety overwhelms me; I dare not give way to thought.

Courtenay, the utmoſt Picture of Woe, never quits her bed-ſide; he preſſes her hand, and drops the ſharp tear of Anguiſh on it, while ſhe aſks him for himſelf. It is but ſeldom ſhe knows him, and as ſoon as ſhe

ſhe recognizes him, the joy ſhe expreſſes at ſeeing him alive, throws her into faintings, from whence, when ſhe returns to life, ſhe falls into a delirium. Can we then juſtly entertain hopes? And yet, how can we endure the thought of her dying, after all the diſtreſſes ſhe has undergone? Is it then impoſſible for earthly felicity to reward her in this life? Muſt the whole of her recompence be in Heaven? Surely her virtues and ſufferings might intitle her to ſome ſhare of happineſs here, and to immortal happineſs hereafter. But God knows beſt. No doubt, "whatever is, is right." I will therefore endeavour to emulate the dear Creature's example, and kiſs the rod in ſilent ſubmiſſion.

Monday.

I would not ſend this off yeſterday, as I hoped to have added ſome lines of comfort, and repreſented things in a leſs gloomy aſpect than the fate of my *Emma* then portended. She ſeemed much better on *Saturday* night, had no return of her delirium, and ſlept ſeveral hours. Yeſterday ſhe continued compoſed, had no fever, but ſpoke very little. This morning I congratulated her on the promiſing approach of her recovery; ſhe ſhook her head; "My dear *Louiſa*, (ſaid ſhe,) do not flatter yourſelf, or nouriſh the hopes of poor *Courtenay*, that

my recovery is at all nearer now than it was ſome time ſince. I feel I cannot, nor do I wiſh to live."

"Not wiſh to live, my *Emma!* when now the proſpect of happineſs is before you, when you have only to extend your arm to reach it?"

"Alas! *Louiſa*, you err when you think the proſpect of happineſs is within my reach, or even view. Should Heaven, to protract my miſery, prolong my life, would it not be an increaſe of diſtreſs, to be conſtrained to refuſe the only man I ever loved the requeſt it is moſt natural he would make? And how could I, with the appearance of honour and delicacy to the world, give my hand to a man with whom I have been publickly accuſed of the moſt horrid crimes? Oh! *Louiſa*, my dear *Louiſa*, revolve this in your mind, and join with your unhappy Friend, in wiſhing a ſpeedy end to her exiſtence, which is doomed for ever to be wretched?" I urged every thing my tenderneſs could ſuggeſt, to reconcile her to the thought of giving her hand to *Courtenay*; repeated her Lord's wiſh, that he could join their hands. Oh! *Fanny*, I never ſaw any one ſo ſteady. I could not prevail on her; ſhe ſtill advanced ſo many pleas on the impropriety of ſuch a circumſtance, but begged me to conceal her reſolutions from *Courtenay*, "as the know-

knowledge of them might make him wretched, and the ſight of his diſtreſs would render her ſmall remains of life more painful."

I left her, in hopes ſhe would revolve our conference in her own mind, and think leſs rigidly on the ſteps we all ardently wiſhed her to purſue. On my return, I was alarmed at ſeeing a viſible alteration in her appearance; though ſhe was weak and languid before, yet now ſhe looked infinitely more ſo. Her Doctor was ſurprized; till this day, he had entertained hopes of her ſpeedy recovery, but now he ſaw ſhe had been loſing ground ſome time. His fears amounted almoſt to a confirmation with me. I fixed my eyes on him, to penetrate, if poſſible, into the deepeſt receſſes of his heart. Alas! my dear *Fanny*, my ſearching eyes brought no return of comfort to my ſoul; I was ſunk in dull deſpair. In this ſituation, the moſt forlorn of men, (for ſo I think we may truly ſtile poor *Courtenay*, ſhould our fears be realized,) in this ſituation he diſcovered me. The phantom Hope, which, though it ſo often deceives, ſtill deludes us on, had yet a little footing in his breaſt. "Why that melancholy look, my Friend, (ſaid he, preſſing my hand:) Is my *Emma* worſe? And yet, do not tell me, I cannot ſupport the information."—"I told him we had had ſome converſation concerning him, that perhaps ſhe had

had talked rather too much, and was now, in conſequence of her exertion, not quite ſo well. "My deareſt *Louiſa*, (ſaid he,) we muſt be cautious; conſider, the gentle frame of the dear creature has been torn by the rough hand of Anguiſh; the fierce billows of Affliction have long beat on her tender bark; let us then avoid every circumſtance which may retard her recovery; for, oh! my Friend, I could not now ſupport an adverſe ſtroke of Fortune. No, my whole ſoul looks forward to her for happineſs; and ſhould, which Heaven avert! keen Diſappointment, with her leaden wing, ſhadow o'er my riſing hopes, ſhe would find me more defenceleſs to her blaſt than I ever yet have been. I could not, I would not wiſh to ſurvive my expectations." His ſanguine expectations gave me the moſt extreme anxiety. Alas! what will he feel when he finds the reſolution ſhe has taken, even if ſhe ſhould much longer be an inhabitant of this vale of tears. But I much apprehend her diſſolution is at no very diſtant period. Ah! who ſhall enable me to ſuſtain ſo heavy a blow? Who ſhall ſpeak comfort to the deſpairing *Courtenay?* How has his, and his *Emma*'s life been ſignalized with Affliction. We may ſay, with *Gray*, that

"Melancholy mark'd *them* for her own."

Oh!

Oh! what a leſſon does their ſtory afford to Parents! May theſe unfortunate Lovers be the laſt ſacrifice at the curſt ſhrine of Ambition!

Oh! what a ſcene have I beheld; and yet is it not the prelude to one more ſolemnly affecting? Yes, *Fanny*, our dear, our gentle, our ever afflicted *Emma*, will, too ſoon, be for ever torn from us; I cannot weep; the ſpring of my tears is ſtopped. Alas! why ſhould I weep, and weary Heaven with my prayers; I cannot change its immutable decree? The word of the Almighty is paſſed; the Perſecutor was ſent forth, and *Emma*, the once blooming *Emma*, was given up to him, to ſhew the world how much Virtue could bear; the joys of Heaven alone can recompence her matchleſs ſufferings.

The fatal reſolution ſhe had taken preyed on her delicate frame; after the unparalleled misfortunes which have ſo long ſurrounded her, ſhe at laſt falls a victim to the opinion of the world; ſhe deſerved not, nor can ſhe ſupport its cenſures. She would, in tenderneſs to her beloved *Courtenay*, have concealed her intention of for ever remaining ſingle, partly from her dread of adding anguiſh to a breaſt already ſurcharged with woe, and partly from her inward conviction

viction of ſoon reſting her griefs in the ſilent grave; but he urged her in ſo ſtrong a manner to juſtify his long indulged hopes, that ſhe could no longer join in deceiving him. Never will her words be worn from my memory. With what force and energy ſhe ſpoke on the ſubject! I cannot do juſtice to her expreſſions, I feel, but cannot convey them to you. Deep as our diſappointment is, we muſt yet allow the propriety of her reaſons. "Oh! *Courtenay*, (ſaid ſhe,) at the latter part, I can never, never be yours; but ſince you receive not my living hand, accept my dying vows; I die, my *Courtenay*, to convince you of my truth. Still cheriſh my memory as I did yours; we yet may meet in Heaven; remember that was our wiſh; we thought not of an union on earth. I have diſpoſed of my fortune between you and my Child; be a Parent to her, love her, for the ſake of her who dies to prove the exceſs of her affection, but who could not live to have that affection condemned by a cruel and partial world. Think how my peace has already been ſtabbed by its cenſures: And ſhall I, by my own conduct, arm its vengeful hand again to pierce my care-worn breaſt! No, let me ſink into the quiet tomb, and only live in the ſweet remembrance of my Friends; there I ſhall be bleſſed for evermore. Comfort my poor Mother,

Mother, and teach her a thankfulneſs to Heaven, that her Child never deviated from the path of Virtue, though its way was planted with thorns, and choaked with briars. My *Fanny* too!—Oh! ſtrengthen her young heart to bear the loſs of a beloved and unfortunate Siſter; tell her I bleſs her and her worthy *Beville*; may they live long and happy; and may the tears they ſhed over my urn be the laſt which Grief draws from their eyes! And now, my beloved Friends, I beg you to withdraw a little ſpace. I wiſh to be alone before I take my final leave of you; I thank Heaven, which grants me the full uſe of my reaſon in this awful hour, and that time has been given me to ſubdue every little reſentment, which undeſerved calumnies and injuries might have created." In obedience to the wiſhes of the dying Saint, we left her apartments, and retired to our reſpective rooms. Our hearts being too full for communication; I only judge of *Courtenay*'s ſituation by my own; if his grief, his anguiſh is more — Oh! how exquiſite it muſt be!

Adieu! my deareſt *Fanny!* where ſhall we look for comfort? Alas! this vain world is filled with inquietudes.

Your moſt diſtreſſed Friend,

LOUISA STRETTON.

LET-

LETTER LXXXI.

To Sir CHARLES BEVILLE.

IT muſt be your taſk, my dear *Beville*, to inform your Wife of the concluſion of her unfortunate Siſter's ſorrows; her ſpotleſs ſoul winged its way to Heaven laſt night. Yes! my Friend, all that now remains of that lovely creature, matchleſs in her virtue and ſufferings, is a pale corſe. This event, though for ſome time expected, overwhelms us all with grief; my own heart is deeply oppreſſed, and yet I am conſtrained to ſmother my affliction, and endeavour to afford conſolation to my *Louiſa* and my poor *Courtenay*. The former, I hope, will find relief from her tears; the latter ſits a Monument of Woe; I tremble for him; Heaven grant him ſtrength of mind to ſupport this heavy trial! You muſt form to yourſelf an idea of our diſtreſs; my pen is unequal to the taſk.

Adieu!

STRETTON.

LET-

LETTER LXXXII.

To Sir CHARLES BEVILLE.

"GRIEF cannot kill," ſaid *Louiſa* to me this morning. "If grief was mortal, ſhould I be here lamenting the death of my angelic *Emma?* Oh, no! my ſoul would accompany my darling Friend." I ſtrove to pour the balm of comfort into the breaſt of my afflicted Wife; but my tears flowed faſter than my ſpeech could find utterance. A participation of ſorrow is more ſoothing and conſolatory than the moſt ſubtle reaſoning or philoſophy; we each found ourſelves relieved by the very exceſs our ſorrow occaſioned. In a little time we were able to form the reſolution of becoming joint Comforters of the forlorn *Courtenay*. We ſought, and found him in the room of Death. He was ſtanding by the bed-ſide, with his eyes intenſely fixed on the breathleſs clay; a death-like paleneſs overſpread his face, and his whole countenance wore the ſemblance of haggard deſpair. He removed not his poſture, nor anſwered to the voice of my *Louiſa*. I went up to him, and taking his hand, attempted to draw him

him from the melancholy object of his love and ſorrow, and to rouze him from the torpid ſtate into which his grief had ſunk him — "My *Courtenay*, (ſaid I,) ſuffer me to lead you from this ſcene of deſolation."— "Whither would you lead me? (cried he, mournfully;) Oh! *Stretton*, whither would you lead me, from the dear remains of my ſoul's treaſure? Ah! ſeek not to ſeparate us — One fate unites us in indiſſoluble bands. In vain you attempt to divide me from that angel form. She is mine! ſhe is mine! (he exclaimed, claſping his hands together in an agony of woe,) and I will never leave her." Terrified, leſt his diſtreſs ſhould urge him to ſome deſperate deed, I threw my arms round him; "My deareſt *Courtenay*, (ſaid I,) I acknowledge I feel your ſorrows; but for the love of Heaven and your eternal welfare endeavour to ſupport your misfortunes like a man; emulate the example of that divine ſufferer; think with what fortitude ſhe bore up againſt the tide of affliction." — "*Stretton*, (he replied,) fear me not; believe me, my life, hateful as it is, ſhall be preſerved.— All my hopes have a long time been to be united to that lovely Creature, who lies there a victim of wretchedneſs. If I brave the vengeance of the Almighty can I expect

pect that union? No, *Stretton*, unleſs I imitate her, how can I hope to be hereafter admitted to thoſe heavenly Manſions, where her innocent ſoul is receiving at this moment the fulneſs of joy? Had I not the ſtrongeſt faith that with her my happineſs will be made perfect, think not I would have breathed one hour of exiſtence beyond her. No, my own arm ſhould have ſet me free from the inquietudes of a diſaſtrous life—One grave, at one moment, ſhould have encloſed our bodies and misfortunes. But *all the days of my appointed time I will patiently wait till my change come.* Yet think not to divert my thoughts, or even divide my perſon from theſe dear remains, till ſhe is laid in the ſilent tomb. Here I will ever ſtay, here pay my evening ſacrifice, and in the morning renew my earlieſt vows. Think what I have ſuffered, think of my loſs, and refuſe me this comfort if you can. I am ſure you will not — Your tear-ſwoln eye, and the labouring ſigh which at this inſtant rends your friendly boſom, tell me you will indulge a Lover's ſorrow."—I believe he is in the right method; an indulgence of ſorrow is the moſt likely way of overcoming it—Not that I would, for the world, loſe the impreſſion this ſad event has made on my mind; no,

I ever

I ever wiſh to feel that nameleſs ſenſibility which attends the reflection of her virtues and misfortunes—Still would I breathe her name with ſighs, and drop the tear of friendſhip on her tomb.

Courtenay intends to build a mauſoleum to her aſhes; he will indulge himſelf with all the voluptuouſneſs of ſorrow; he will daily viſit the receptacle of all his ſoul holds dear, and count the tedious hours which divide him from her. Often too ſhall I ſteal from the buſy haunts of Men, perhaps accompanied by my *Louiſa*, and feaſt on the remembrance of our lovely Friend.

But why ſhould we repine at the concluſion of her ill-fated life? Ought we not rather to rejoice that ſhe now is happy? An union in this world never could have taken place, as ſhe ſaid, with propriety; ſhe had been ſtigmatized with *Courtenay*; and though the Angels of Heaven were not more pure, yet a malevolent world might have caſt its reproaches on her. Let us then ſubmit to the Decree of Providence, and check our murmurings; let us, if poſſible, believe that all is contrived and ordered for the beſt; and though circumſtances may appear misfortunes to us, yet they may be to fulfil ſome wiſe purpoſe, we blind Mortals

cannot

cannot foreſee. May our misfortunes be proportioned to our ſtrength.

Adieu, my dear *Beville*; come and mingle your tears with ours.

STRETTON.

FINIS.

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